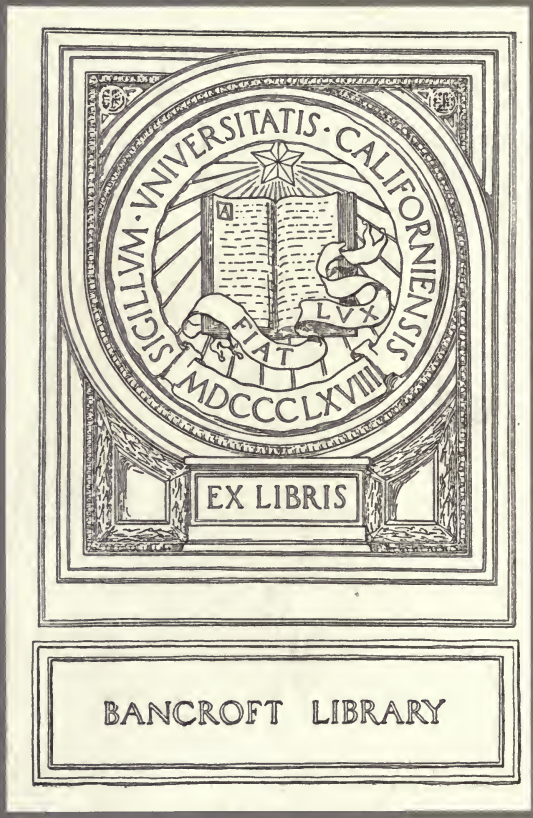

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Mark Chester:

Or

A Mill and a Million

By Carlyle Petersilea

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MARK CHESTER:

OR

A MILL AND A MILLION

A Tale of Southern California

BY

CARLYLE PETERSILEA, 1844-190

AUTHOR OF "THE DISCOVERED COUNTRY," "OCEANIDES,"
"MARY ANNE CAREW," "PHILIP CARLISLE,"
AND MANY OTHERS.

BOSTON:
BANNER OF LIGHT PUBLISHING CO.

LC 1901

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MARK CHESTER.

CHAPTER I.

ALONE, YET NOT ALONE.

It was New Year's eve. The bright golden sun of Southern California was rapidly sinking toward the horizon. The sky was clear and cloudless—too cloudless, in fact, to suit the ranchmen and fruit-growers of this semi-tropical land which was parched and arid, thirsting for the cloud and the rain which would not come.

The waters of the Pacific lay clear and placid; but very few people were straying upon the beach at this season, especially at this time of day. Although the afternoon has been sunny, and comparatively warm, yet all Californians knew that the instant the last rays of the sun disappeared, the night would be clear and very cold.

Redondo beach was nearly deserted: two or three small fishing boats were being drawn ashore by weary fishermen and one after another of these men hastened inland, a couple of long "yellow-tails" dangling from each hand.

The sun, by this time, had disappeared, and the cold, uncomfortable night was fast approaching; the twilight being exceedingly short in this part of the world.

The beach is now apparently deserted—no, not quite—one solitary figure is sitting motionless on that far-off bench, the very last bench toward the south. It would seem that this person, whoever he may be, wishes to escape observation. As he cannot see us, however, we will observe him as closely as possible.

TAYLOR COL. AUG. 1940

It grows darker and darker each moment, and now he is swallowed up within the darkness and becomes invisible, not to us, however: we can see, and hear, and understand. Is he a tramp that he does not seek home and warmth on this chill New Year's eve? He scarcely looks like a vagabond. He is a young man—not over one and twenty at the most—with a fine, intelligent face, high, broad brow, large, dark blue eyes, firm chin, broad shoulders, strong, supple, and well-built; his expression is frank and genial, his clothing, and general appearance clean and respectable. The night has set in cold and dark. He shivers as the chilly air penetrates to the very marrow of his bones. He looks slightly dejected, still there is a brave, determined air about him that is irresistible: we find ourselves in love with him at once. Putting his hand into his pocket he draws forth an old, obsolete coin—one mill. Snapping it lightly into the air with his thumb and finger, he mutters:

"This mite constitutes all the wealth I have in this world—a present from Santa Claus ten years ago—found it among other toys in my stocking—was sure, at that time, it was good old Santa Claus himself who filled my Christmas stocking with gifts; but the fast fleeting years have dispelled my boyish illusion: the gifts were from you, my dear sainted mother, trying to make your boy happy. How well I remember, after pulling out all the toys, feeling something still left in the extreme end of the toe of the sock; and after fishing, with clumsy fingers, for some little time, drawing this mill forth triumphantly. It was carefully wrapped up in a note—my precious little mill! The note was in my mother's handwriting. I well remember my surprise at this. I should like to see Santa Claus with my own eyes, I thought: but the note ran thus:

" 'Dear boy: This is all the money I can give you. There are so many thousands of children that even a mill to each would be more than I could carry: My sleigh would be too heavy for the fleet reindeer and I should not get round in time, I fear; but this mill shall yet prove a fortune to you. All you have to do, when you desire anything while you live, is to take this little coin from your pocket, where I hope you will always keep

it and, while gazing upon it intently, repeat to yourself this formula or prayer. "Dear mother: wherever you may be, within the limitless universe, come to your boy! I need your love, your help. In the name of Santa Claus, I conjure you! Come, oh, come!" Your mother shall hear your prayer and come to you. This is the last and best gift of Santa Claus.'

"This is the first time, since my dear mother's death, that I have been utterly destitute and forlorn—the first night of my life that I have ever found myself without food or shelter—this, the first time that I have found it necessary to take the little coin in my hands, for the purpose of repeating the prayer.

"Mother; dear mother! Do you still live somewhere within the limitless universe? If so, where, oh, where are you, my mother? My mind no longer accepts the myth, Santa Claus. How well I now know that it was the hands of my own mother that had stuffed the little sock with toys, that had placed the mill, with the note, in the toe of the stocking.

"This coin, then, is to be the talisman between her soul and mine. This little mill, is all the wealth I have in the world. Perhaps it may prove to be of more worth than the millions of a Vanderbilt, or a Rockefeller.

"Soul of my mother; come to me now! I know not what to do! I cannot remain out in this cold all night, and without money I cannot obtain shelter and a bed. I would sooner freeze and starve than beg. No; beg I never will! Certainly, I may be able to find employment when the morning comes. The boat arrived here late and my last cent was expended. They told me it was some eighteen or twenty miles to Los Angeles, the city I wish to reach. To be sure I might start and walk all night, but I should present a sorry appearance in the morning. Cold, weary, unkempt and hungry, my appearance would not be very prepossessing. I should simply be looked upon as a tramp, and then, I am sure, all hope would be gone.

"No: I much prefer to remain here and improve any opportunity that may present itself in the morning.

"Ugh!" he muttered. "How exceedingly cold it is! Really, I am thoroughly chilled. Not a human being

in sight, anywhere. Ah, the moon is rising over yonder hill! The sand-dunes out there look as cold and desolate as my own heart is at this moment. The face of the full moon seems as clear as crystal and as cold.

"I wonder if the people in this part of the world are as cold and sharp as their atmosphere? If so, I may not expect much sympathy.

"How startlingly clear all objects are, now that the moon is up. I would much rather the darkness covered me.

"When at home, I could, at least, hide myself within a London fog. The nights were warm in Africa; in China the people were sympathetic; in India they took me by the hand and called me brother; but I know absolutely nothing about this new world—this America. If my life here should prove as cold and barren as this, my first entrance into this country, it will be desolate indeed.

"What a number of little shanties there are all along this beach, to be sure; besides, a good many tents, but that great hotel over there looks like a palace, or the grandest bungalow in all India. Palaces, mansions, cottages, shanties and tents, seem to make up this town. Ah! yes. I remember. This is a sea-side resort. One of those smallest tents, and a bed, would make me happy tonight, at least; but even that I cannot obtain."

He rubbed the coin smartly between his thumb and finger: It glistened softly in the bright rays of the moon. He sat gazing steadily at it. A mist passed over his eyes as he gazed. The features of his own dear mother became distinctly visible to him, and her soft, loving eyes were gazing directly into his own. He thought that her warm arms enfolded him; her long hair swept about him, and as it did so, glowing warmth filled his entire body. A mother's soft, warm kisses were pressed on cheek and brow; and all this seemed as real to him as though she had actually been there in a mortal form. A soft voice whispered:

"My son—my own dear boy! Behold, I am here at your call. The Universe is not so vast that your cry cannot reach me. My soul is not so impotent that it cannot protect my child. My son, there is only a thin

veil between us, and your earnest desire has rent even that asunder. The veil is not impenetrable. You have come but a little way to meet me, and, see! I am here. Cheer up, dear boy; food, shelter, and a bed shall be yours this cold night. Your body shall not suffer. Keep your soul pure and bright. Brighten up that little coin, dear; let not a spot or blemish be upon it. It shall be a token between thee and me, and when you desire my aid, gaze upon its bright surface intently; this will help to part the veil between us and we will converse together.

"I will aid and comfort thee, my child, far more now than I should be able to do if I were still in the mortal form. It is better as it is, for if I were within the body I might not be here to assist thee, but now wherever thou art there can I be also.

"Dost see that little boat heaving toward the shore? In it is a belated fisherman. Upon him I will throw my influence, and he will be kind to thee. I have hypnotized thee, my son. I will also hypnotize him.

"Farewell for a space."

CHAPTER II.

"AN' WHAR DID YE CUM FRUM?"

The young wanderer started. Had he fallen asleep and dreamed of his mother? Perhaps; he could not tell. He replaced the coin in his pocket.

Directly in front of where he sat, a solitary boat was rising and falling with the stubborn shore waves; constantly beaten back by them, still advancing nearer and yet nearer with each incoming wave. At last it grated on the sands. A sturdy fisherman leaped out and seizing the boat, tried with all his strength to force her high and dry beyond the reach of the waves.

The young man gazed at him for a moment, abstractedly. The lusty fisherman perceiving the solitary form seated on the bench, called in stentorian tones:

"Hullo, thar! Can yer help a feller a little? Molly's a stubborn critter when she's a mind ter be. She's like some hosses, bound tet hev her own way."

The young man hastened to the side of the fisherman.

"Molly jest loves them waves, she does. Stubborn ole gal! She hates the sands like pisen. Here, you jest catch her by the head here, an' hold her steady like, an' I'll jest run around ter the starn, an' push. Here, take holt o' this rope here in her nose, an' hold on like Jehu, fur she'll try hard ter git away, yew bet!"

The young man did as directed, and held on "like Jehu" for the boat was heavy and the waves quite powerful. The fisherman was bare-headed; his brown legs and feet bare to the knees. He rushed into the breakers, which dashed about him to his waist, and with his brawny arms he pushed with all his might at the stern of the boat, the young man, at the same time, putting forth his utmost strength at the bow; and, while doing so, his eyes caught the name "Molly" which was staring at him blackly. With many twists, gratings, creakings, and heavy groanings, together with backward flings, rearings and forward pitches, Molly was at length conquered and landed high and dry on

the sands, very unwillingly on her part, and more unwilling still were the roaring, ardent waves that desired to retain her within their rollicking embrace.

"Thar, my beauty!" exclaimed the fisherman, "thar ye air, at last, safe an' sound, high an' dry. But yer a kicker, my bonnie belle, an' a high kicker at that. Wall, now fur the speckled beauties. Why, some o' them's as long as yer arm an' longer. A hundred yaller-tails, if thar's one; some rock-cod an' croakers thrown in, an' two or three fat halibut. Jerusalem! though, but I'm tired. Ben out sence the dawn, pard. It must be nine o' the clock, sure; an' I'm dead beat. Sun's jest burned me up all day, an' now it's a reg'lar Klondike, yew bet!

"Jewhiteker! aint it cold though? Say, pard, can ye help me fur awhile? Or air ye too much of a dandy? Yer purty strong though fur a b'ardless boy. Ye pulled at Molly right smart."

"I should be very glad to help you," answered the young man, "and I hope you will find that I am no dandy."

"No?" cried the stalwart fisherman. "How do ye happen ter hev on a biled shirt, wedge toes, razor collar, an' top coat as nearly trails on ther ground, then?"

And the long-legged, bare-armed, hatless fisherman squared himself, with dripping arms akimbo, eyeing each article of the young traveler's attire with scornful lip.

"I landed from the five o'clock boat," replied our hero, "and have not yet changed my dress."

"Wall, now, ef yer a'goin' tew help me, ye'll hev ter take off thet thar toggery. Guess yer up at the hotel thar, aint yer? Wish thar wus somebody else round 'at I could git. But nary a critter's about. Say now—ye'll hev time ter run up an' change them thar cloes, an' while yer gone I'll light a little fire yere an' git dried up some'ut, an' eat a bite. Tell yer, pard, haint stopped ter eat a bit sence mornin'. Guess a cup o' hot coffee 'll not go amiss. What yer say, now'll yer dew it?" seeing the young stranger hesitated.

"I am not staying at the hotel."

"Wall, never mind whar yer a stayin'; can't be fur off, else yer'd not be a settin' moonin' on thet thar

bench, in the cold. What's ther marter with yer? Air ye love-sick? Jest ther kind o' feller as gits spoony; soft-like an' pale-like. Haint cut away frum apron-strings yit, hev yer?"

A sob rose in the youth's throat, but he swallowed it.

"Cum, hurry up, now, ef yer a goin' ter help me! Go long an' git off thet thar toggery; an' mind now, put on an old flanul shirt, ef yer hev one, sum trouses as yer don't keer about, an' an' ole par o' thick shoes. It'll take both on us 'till midnight ter take keer o' them purty beauties."

"I cannot change my dress," said the young man, "for this, which I wear, is all I have in the world."

"Wall, th're purty good clo'es; but, why in thunder don't yer hev a change of 'um? Tew clean fish fur a man, while yer dressed like a dude, without nary a change o' rags! Wall, all right, pard; as long as yer'll help me perhaps we'll make shift. So, now then, I'll make a fire an' git on ther coffee-kittle. You jest take this ere canteen an' run up ter thet thar well, yender, an' fill it with water, while I git sum sticks an' sea-weed together an' light the blaze."

The young man took the canteen and started toward the high land; filling it from the well he retraced his footsteps. The fire was already blazing briskly and the coffee-kettle was soon steaming. The fisherman prepared a good sized fish, and soon had it broiling over the coals; then, taking from the boat a can of baked beans, a lot of hardtack, a loaf of brown bread and some butter, he spread the whole on a piece of tarpaulin, which he placed on the sands. Taking a couple of large tin cups from the boat, he poured out the steaming coffee and invited the young man to partake.

"Ye'll be hungry enough 'fore yer git through," he remarked, "so yer better trace up," and they proceeded "to brace up."

Hot coffee was not amiss this cold night; the broiled fish was delicious; the baked beans and brown bread had been heated over the fire and were very nourishing. The fisherman heaped the fire with dry sea-weed, drift-wood and sticks, until it blazed high and when they

had finished their meal, both were in a glow of warmth and comfort.

The stars were glittering in splendor; some of them looking large and bright like small moons. One, in particular, glinted alternately, blue, red and green. The young man had never observed this before in any other land.

"That star takes on all the colors of the rainbow," he remarked. "It must be owing to the clearness of this southern atmosphere."

"Thet star? Wall, now yer hev mentioned it, I'll tell yer, we fishers call it Joseph, or, ole Jo, fur short."

"Joseph?" said the youth, interogatively. "Why Joseph?"

"Wall, yer see as how it changes its color so often, we call it Joseph's coat of many colors, or, jest ole Jo, fur short."

The young traveler smiled. The idea was rather poetical than otherwise.

"Now, pard," said the fisherman, "take this ere ole oil coat, an' put it on hind side afore, like ole Grimes, an' let's git ter work. See! I'll button it all down behind, instid of afore, ter keep them clo'es o' yourn clean. Turn up yer shirtsleeves, jest this 'ere way, an' cover up them wedge toed shoes an' dude trouses, o' yourn, with this 'ere piece of tarpaulin, an' yer all right fur a job of a couple of hours or so. Yer don't think yer'll git locked out, dew yer? Yer didn't say as whar yer was a stoppin'."

"I have not yet secured a place for the night."

A tremor of sadness crept into his voice, although he had made an effort to speak nonchalantly.

"Jerusalem-Jewhiteker! Why didn't yer tell me thet afore? Why, young feller, yer can't git in anywhar now. Everybody's shut up an' gone ter bed long afore this, 'cept, perhaps, the hotel. Dew yer think o' goin' ter the hotel?"

"No."

"Whar, then?"

"If I work for you until midnight, can you not accommodate me for the remainder of the night? Where do you sleep? Is your home near here?"

"Home? Wall, now, thet thar's good! Why, Molly, she's my home."

"Do you mean to say that you sleep in the boat?"

"Sleep in ther boat? Why, thar aint a better place ter sleep, in all ther world, then that thar boat. Dew yer think I would leave my Molly an' my yaller-tails to thieves an' ravenin' wolves? No, no. Molly an' me air never sep'rated. She's my wife, Molly is. She's my home, Molly is. She's my sweetheart, Molly is, an' she supports me, Molly does. I tell yer, young man, thet thar boat's a treasure, an' ef I couldn't git another like her, a million wouldn't buy her. She's a Rockefeller ter me, yew bet! Air ye intendin' ter stay round these parts, young feller?"

"I had not thought of so doing. The city of Los Angeles is my destination."

"Wall, a man can't go a fishin' in Los Angeles, else, perhaps, I might go thar. But my fish find ther way thar, yew bet! Some o' these very yaller-tails will be eat thar, by the Los Angeles angels."

"Were you ever in the city?" asked the young man.

"Bet yer life!"

"Is it a place where one might hope to prosper?"

"Wall, now yer hev got me. I couldn't prosper thar, sure. If yer've got plenty o' money, perhaps yer might. Don't know 'bout its bein' a very good place fur a poor man. What kind o' bisness yer goin' into?"

"Well, that is uncertain."

"What kind o' bisness hev yer ben inter in ther past? An' whar did yer cum frum?"

"My home was in London until two years ago, when my mother died, leaving me alone in the world. I then went to South Africa, and from there to Hong Kong, then to India, from there I have arrived here."

"Wall, yer hev ben all around robinhood's barn, an' no mistake. What'd yer expect ter find out thar in Afriky among the nigger coons?"

"Oh, I was not among the Negroes. There are towns and cities, in South Africa, settled entirely by white people. I did not feel contented there, however, and so went to China. But there I was restless, then went

to India. While there I could think of nothing but America, and here I am."

"Wall, ye must hev spent a fortin, travelin' round arter thet way?"

"No; my mother was in poverty, and when she died, nothing was left me but a solitary mill, which she had put into my stocking when a little lad, as one of a number of Christmas presents; and, for a long time thereafter, I thought the gifts were from Santa Claus."

"Wall, how did yer git money ter travel around so much?"

"I went to South Africa in the position of gentleman's valet. My services were not required after we arrived there. I then shipped to Hong Kong, as captain's private steward and bodyguard; but not caring to follow the sea, I went to India, paying my own passage, which took about all the money I had; but I did not care for a life among the Hindoos, and took a place, as table-waiter, on board a steamer which would connect with a Pacific liner; then, once more I took the position of waiter. The ship put in for repairs at Honolulu, and some months would elapse before she could again be fit for sea service. I took passage on a sailing vessel for San Francisco. She was wrecked, but the crew and one or two who had taken passage, were saved. All our baggage being lost we were sent to San Francisco, but were there advised to go to Los Angeles where the climate was mild and the chances for a poor man better. My passage to this port, was secured to me by the 'Life Saving Company' for those who are wrecked at sea.

"I landed here at five o'clock, and the mill, which my mother gave me, is all the money I have in the world."

CHAPTER III.

"OLE KISTER."

"Wall, now pard, yer wuss off nor I am, fur all yer look so much like a dude. Say, now, young feller, what's yer name?"

"My name is Mark Chester. Will you not oblige me with your name?"

"Wall, they call me, around here, Molly Kister—ole Molly—ole kiss—but occasionally a lady will call me Mr. Nathaniel Kester, an' as ye hev ben so kind as ter tell me all about yerself, I'll spin ye my yarn. I cum frum Yarm'uth, I did, way back in New Englan'. Wall, I wus thar sumut o' a fisherman, but I wanted ter cum ter Californy an' git gold. I onct hed a sweethart back in Yarm'uth, but she died an' thet made me kind'er rovin' yer see. Yer say as how ye hev got but one mill; wall, I hed nary a red when I landed here at Redonder. How wus I ter git ter them thar mountains? 'Twas in ther mornin' when I hauled off thet thar boat, the Corony, hardly daylight, an 'twant in ther winter, like 'tis now, an' I walked 'long up ther wharf an' then turned onter ther beach an' went an' sot right down on thet thar same bench as yer sot on when I fust seed yer, an' I axed a feller, as cum down thar ter fish, whar them thar gold mines wus, an' he telled me they wus two hunder'd miles away, off up towerd the north.

"Jerusalem-Jerico! How wus I ter git two hunder'd miles without a cent o' cash an' nothin' ter eat? Oh go by! I don't want nothin' on yer," and Mr. Kester waved his hands toward the north repudiatingly. "Go by! What do I want o' gold mines when thet thar pond lies afore me? Thar's sum'ut ter eat in thet thar water, an' thet thar ole well up thar 'll give me sum'ut ter drink. I tell yer young feller thet thar sea hed more charms fur me then all the gold mines in Californy, an' how I cum ter ever hev the gold fever, is a question thet I can't ans'er.

"Air yer troubled thet way much, young feller? e'a'n-a-most all the men about here hev the fever bad, betimes."

"Well," answered Mark, "I do not think I should care to work in the mines: It would be rather a good thing, though, to own a large share in a very rich mine."

"Wall, thar air plenty o' them ter sell, ef ye hev ther chink, but a mill wun't buy um, my boy. Wall, as I wus a sayin', I sot on thet thar bench, an' thet thar man went lazily down toward the water, an' I yelled arter him: 'Look yer here, pardner! Goin' a fishin'?'

"'Yew bet!' he yelled back.

"'Say!' an' he whirled his'self around an' looked at me.

"'I say, pardner: Can yer lend a hand ter day?'

"I jumped up an' yelled back: 'Yew bet I kin.'

"'Cum on then!' an' thet settled it fur me. I went with him in his boat, an' we jest hauled in them yaller-tails all day long, an' here I hev been ever since. Yer see, I got along purty well, concid'rin' as how I hed nary a red. Twus three year ago las' sum'er sence I cum. I shar'd fur awhile with ther feller as owned ther boat, an' at las' I tuck a fancy ter Molly, here, an' made love ter her right away. She was a restin' high an' dry on the sands when I fust seed her. Ther man as owned her wanted ter go to Alasky, hed mis-used her I rekon, fur she was ruther shaky, weak in the jints, an' not a bit o' paint on her burnt cheeks; but I gin him fifty dollars fur her; all ther money I could spare then, an' Molly blong'd ter me. Wall, yer bet I hed her jerk'd up in short order, jints made stiff, bottum an' sides well corked up, an' then I gin her all ther paint she wanted, an' she's ther bestest fishin' smack on this 'ere shore. She hes arn'd me a'ready nigh on ter a thousan' dollar an' five hundurd o' thet is snug an' taut. Now, thet's my story, boy, thet is, ther most on it."

"And so, Mr. Kester, you have never married? Are there no nice young ladies around here that you remain single?"

"Yung leddis? An' of whut use wuld a yung leddy be ter me—ole Kister? Yes; thar air yung leddis here,

by ther score, but when yer talk 'bout gals, yer hev me on ther hip; thair all yung leddis, but nary a gal. When ole Kister marries, he wants a gal, not a yung leddy; an' I hev sworn a vow, that I'll never marry a gal thet's not like what Molly wus; thet was ther name of my dead sweethart, yer know.

"Molly she culd go out in a boat an' fish all day with ther best man in all Yarm'uth, an' beat him every time. She culd paddle aroun' on shore all day, barefut, an' never catch cold, an' when night set in, black an' stormy, as it mostly do' in Yarm'uth, in winter, she culd make a little home look bright an' cumfurble fur her ole dad, fry the fish an' make ther teakittle sing. Thet's ther kind o' gal I want. None o' yer leddis fur me. But I am content, yung feller. Molly might be jelus ef I shud put another in ther place she hed made up her mind ter fill."

"I understand by this, Mr. Kester, that you think your old sweetheart, Molly, knows all about you at the present time."

"Thar's sum'ut as hangs on thet," replied Mr. Nathaniel Kester. "I didn't so think, but I'm blowed ef I don't think so now. Listen, yung feller. When I go out on thet thar Pacific in ther mornin' an' she's smilin' an' sweet as a baby an' I git thet arnest at ther catchin' o' them yaller-tail beauties, so as ter forgit all about ther signs o' ther wether, presently I hear Molly speakin' ter me soft like. 'Nathan,' she says, 'look up, Nathan,' an' I look up, an' ther sky 's got black'ern thunder. 'Hurry, Nathan,' she says agin; an' I hurry, yew bet; an' jist git in afore ther storm breaks. Young feller, she hes saved me frum bein' wrecked many a time.

"I always smoke jist afore I turn in, an' no other time, an' when ther fish is all taken care on, an' I gits out my ole pipe—an' thet reminds me as how she used ter fill it fur me with her purty fingers, her ole dad's an' mine, thet we might hev a sociable smoke jest afore I went hum, fur I spent ther best o' my evenin's thar with her dad an' hur—it allers seems as ef I culd see her fingers pressin' down the terbacker, an' then I set an' smoke fur awhile, an' then it is thet I feel soft arms about my neck, an' a cool breath on my cheek,

an' as I take ther last wiff, an' lay ther pipe down, blessed ef I don't feel her sweet lips pressed ter mine, an' like as though I hurd a voice, an' it says, 'Cheer up, Nathan—cheer up my man; it is I, Molly, an' no mistake. You'd not best git another gal, an' then I'll stay by yer, an' be a careful an' lovin' wife ter ye, 'til yer cum here too.' An' onct or twice I saw her as plain as I am lookin' at yer now."

Mr. Kester's eyes, which were, by the way, very fine and large, were glowing softly in the moonlight and his bronzed face became radiant. He sighed gently as he took the last fish from the boat.

"Wall," he said, "we hev got um purty nigh all cleaned, an' it's ony half-past 'leven. Ye hev got plenty o' time, yung feller, an' yer jist go right up thar ter thet thar gran' hotel an' stay fur the rest o' ther night. Here's a dollar an' a half fur ther work ye hev done fur me. Yer'll git a decent room, bed, an' breakfast fur a dollar, ef yer tell um ole Kister sent ye. I'm fraid yer'll hev ter pay a dollar an' a half ef yer don't. They favor me, yer see, an' them as wurks fur me, an' they buys plenty o' yaller-tails o' me, likewise."

Mr. Kester laid down his last fish; the fire was burning dimly, and the cold was becoming unendurable.

"I carnt make yer comfurble in ther boat," said Nathan, "or yer might save ther dollar. Thar's ony one place in it whar a man kin sleep, an' thar's whar I sleep. Yer kin take a peek inter it ef yer like."

They arose from the sands, and Nathan opened a couple of little doors that closed the space beneath a broad seat in the stern of the boat, exposing to view quite a comfortable bed and bedding.

"Yer see," he said, "I kin sleep all right in thar, but thar's no room ter spare. Molly an I'll take our smoke now, an' then I'll turn in. Look yer here, yung feller! I like ther looks on yer, an' I like yer wurk, an' ef ther wust cums ter ther wust, I'll see yer agin, mayn't I?"

"I hope you will see me very many times. I shall never forget you, Mr. Kester; and I sincerely thank you for your kindness and good opinion."

The young man turned down his sleeves, buttoned on

his cuffs, removed the old oil coat with the help of the fisherman, untied the tarpaulin, looking none the worse for the three hours of cold, dirty, disagreeable work. He had thoroughly, and carefully washed his hands, that no odor of fish might attach to them.

"Good night, young feller!" called Mr. Kester, as Mark turned his footsteps toward the hotel.

"Good night, and happy dreams of Molly," returned Mark, as he wended his way upward; for the grand hotel stood on quite a commanding elevation.

CHAPTER IV.

"THE MAN WHO LOOKS LIKE ME."

As Mark drew near the hotel, he perceived that the windows were ablaze with light; and strains of music caught his ear; while many carriages were waiting around, and near the grand entrance.

"Ah! A fete," mused young Chester.

As he mounted the steps of the spacious veranda, he stepped one side to allow a young lady and gentleman to pass. He started back in surprise as his eyes rested upon the young man.

What could be the meaning of that which he saw? Was it his double? But for the young lady hanging on the arm of the stranger, he might suppose himself looking in a mirror at his own reflection; but the young people descended the steps and entering one of the carriages were driven rapidly away.

Chester turned, entered the hotel, and found his way to the office. The clerk stared at him inquiringly.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Chesterfield," said he, respectfully, "but I thought you had just driven away in your carriage."

Mark smiled.

"I think you are mistaken in my identity," he said.

The clerk still stared incredulously, but turned the hotel register toward him. Mark inscribed his name, then turned the book back. The clerk glanced at it surprisedly. There, in a bold, round hand, was written: Mark Chester, Hong Kong.

Mark then stated that he would like a cheap, quiet room, for the remainder of the night, and breakfast on the following morning. One of the attendants, taking down a key, beckoned him to follow, which he did willingly. He was shown into a small but neat and comfortable room well warmed by an open grate.

Young Chester, being very weary, quickly retired.

The hotel clerk down stairs was still staring at the register.

"Wonder what devilment he is up to now? I could have sworn I saw him get into that carriage, and before I could turn about there he stood. Mark Chester: Indeed! A cheap room? Well, that is the first time I ever knew him to order anything cheap. He is up to some trick; of that I am sure; but I will keep my eyes open. Why did he sign a name so much like his own? Mark Chester—Marcus Chesterfield. Well, I do not pretend to understand it at all. It would take one above the ordinary to take cognizance of all his mad pranks. I suppose a millionaire can do about as he pleases, but if he had been a poor man, he would have been in the chain gang, or penitentiary, long before this. Ah, the carriage has returned. Now we shall know more about it," and presently Mr. Marcus Chesterfield entered the office. The clerk looked blankly at him.

"This is the first time in my life," he muttered, "that I ever saw two people look exactly alike; yet they are different in manner and expression. The face of one is that of a devil-may-care, the other thoughtful and slightly dejected, if I am any judge."

Mr. Chesterfield took an expensive cigar from a gold case, lighted it, and between bejewelled fingers carried it to his lips.

"Deuced cold night!" he ejaculated, as he lazily sent forth wreaths of smoke, head on one side, and one eye half closed. "Any new arrivals, this evening?"

"Only one," replied the clerk. "A young man," But he mentally reserved the remainder of the sentence—so much like yourself that you might be twins.

Mr. Marcus Chesterfield examined the register with a nonchalant air.

"Mark Chester. Whew! Why did he not call himself by my name, and done with it? Hong Kong. Is he a Chinese, then?"

"Not a native, certainly," answered the clerk.

"Young. or old?"

"Young: About your own age, I should say. A young man, as I said at first, I think."

"Does he look like a person one could associate with?" asked Marcus. "It is getting very desolate here. One needs some companionship, you know."

"A very respectable looking young man, indeed," replied the clerk.

"Used to good society, should you judge?"

"Impossible to say, on so short an acquaintance. He remained just long enough to write his name and inform me that he desired a cheap, small room, with which he was, forthwith, provided."

"Ah, well, au revoir," returned Marcus, a shade of ennui and slight disgust crossing his countenance.

"Good night," returned the clerk, politely. "Anything you would like sent up?"

"Yes; yes. I think so. A bottle of champagne, please, and some pate de froid gras, and see that the fires in the grates are made bright and brisk. I thought it was eternal summer here in this part of the world. One might as well be at the North Pole on such a night as this;" and with a shrug and shiver, the young millionaire ascended to his sumptuous apartments, the best private suite the hotel afforded.

The rooms were bright and luxurious in the extreme. The refreshments soon stood before the young man, on the marble table, together with the finest of damask, clearest of cut glass, the brightest of silver, and the daintiest of china.

Young Chesterfield sat luxuriously sipping champagne and eating choice morsels; and he mused:

"How delighted the mother was, because I took them home in my carriage. I would like to be as certain of the daughter's feelings. I would like to know just what she thinks of me. Her manner is rather cold and distant toward me, yet she danced with me a number of times; but her eyes—those beautiful eyes—they scarcely ever look into mine; and, when by chance I meet their glance, I read no love—no admiration within them."

He tossed off another glass of champagne.

"The mother would like to marry her daughter to my millions; of that I feel assured: but the daughter? Time and flattering attentions may yet win her. But after all, what do I want of a poverty-stricken wife? Her beauty would soon pale. I know that I should shortly grow tired of her. Some other beautiful woman would attract my attention. In fact, I am more than

half in love with that tall, dark eyed—rather weird eyes they are too—dark haired beauty shall I say? No, she is not really beautiful; still, she is very attractive. I must know more of her—get better acquainted. She? Well; she rather seeks my society than otherwise, and those flashing orbs of hers look straight into mine as though striving to hold me with a potent spell. I hear a great deal about hypnotism. Just now it is quite the fad. I wonder if women have the power to hypnotize men? I don't know why turn about is not fair play.

"We hear of the male sex exerting hypnotic power over the weaker sex, but not so much of the power of the female hypnotizing the male.

"Mesmerism, hypnotism; I should like to understand what the power really is—to analyze it. I am rather given to analytical research," and he tossed off another glass of champagne.

"Well, eyes are eyes; but the power behind the eyes, therein lies hypnotism. Ugh! I see those great black eyes shining upon me now, and I could take my oath there is a shadowy form connected with them. Well, I have no fear of ghosts, or shadowy forms. I am rather partial to them, than otherwise. That, surely, can be no ghost, for it takes on the form of the very black-eyed girl I flirted with tonight. But, I was very careful not to be observed by that mother and daughter.

"I have heard and read of such things as apparitions of the living. I will put out the gas, place this light screen before the fire; perhaps, by so doing, I shall be able to see what those eyes mean."

He suited his actions to his words, then threw himself once more into the depths of the easy chair.

"Really," he continued, "this is the witching hour—two o'clock—and not a sound to be heard throughout this large house.

"Ah! There are the eyes again; and the form is much more distinct. Its shadowy arms are stretched forth toward me, and the eyes are burning into my soul; but the eyes are not holy eyes: I know that. I feel that ostentation and greed hide within their brightness; those shadowy hands would clutch at me, not

alone for myself, but for money and the position I should give her.

"Now that I have read their language, they slink away into the dark shadows. The form is gone also, and I had best retire and let sleep cool my fevered brain." Which he accordingly did.

CHAPTER V.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Let us look in, for a moment, on the mother and daughter.

On leaving the carriage, they went directly to their own rooms. A serving maid was sitting before the grate, awaiting them. They were soon divested of their wraps and evening dresses.

We like to see ladies within their own homes, in their easy wrappers and unbound hair; for we can get a better idea of their true characters. The mother is a large, fine-looking lady, of about forty years, and carries those years easily. Look as closely as we may, we cannot discover any silver threads amongst the gold. The gold is long and abundant, falling half way to the floor. The large, blue eyes are still bright and expressive. Her complexion is clear, but somewhat pale. The form is full and matronly, but still retaining much of womanly grace. She carries her head somewhat haughtily, and we feel intuitively that she is one to be obeyed; and, while the maid is still employed brushing out her beautiful hair, we will take a survey of the daughter.

She is cast in the same mould as her mother. Still, in many respects they are diametrically opposite. The daughter is as fair and sweet as the fairest and sweetest of southern California's sunniest and brightest of days. She has long golden hair, like her mother's, yet it ripples more, and clings more softly. She is not much taller than her mother, but so slight of form that one would think her so. Her eyes are in form and color like the elder lady's, but where the expression of one is imperious, the other is dreamy and spirituelle. She has the sweetest of rose-bud lips, together with a large, well developed forehead; fair complexion, dainty hands and feet, and a white, swan-like neck.

"Good night, ma'am," said the maid, as she took her departure. "It is nearing one o'clock, and I must be up in the morning in good time."

"Good night," returned both mother and daughter, and they were left alone with the warm firelight shining full upon them.

"Isa, dear; how very kind of Mr. Chesterfield to bring us home in his elegant carriage. We may surely feel quite honored."

Isa yawned.

"Do you take it that way, mother? We had but a few steps to come, and I would much rather have walked. I felt greatly oppressed shut up within that close carriage."

"Oppressed?" echoed Mrs. Morton. "Does such luxurious elegance oppress you? It seemed to me that I was returning to my former estate. For the moment I dreamed myself once more a girl, rolling home from the opera, or, perhaps, a grand ball, in my own carriage," and Mrs. Morton heaved a sigh of regret. "Oh! Isa, little girl, you have never known the meaning of the word opulence."

"But, mama, dear, I have been very, very happy as we are. We have never wanted for anything."

"Wanted, Isa, I have wanted for everything."

"But I mean, mama, we have never been hungry or cold, or without shelter."

"No; not quite so bad as that, I admit; but we might have been hungry and cold if I had not taken summer boarders and lodgers, thereby gaining the wherewith to keep us from actual want. Mr. Chesterfield was quite attentive to you all the evening, Isa; but I thought your manner toward him very cool indeed."

"And why, pray, should my manner toward him be otherwise?"

"O, Isa; how can you ask such a question? Mr. Chesterfield is a millionaire; the only really wealthy man who has ever paid you unmistakable attentions."

"I wish that his attentions were less unmistakable. I certainly would not encourage them; and I feel myself greatly to blame for dancing with him more than once this evening. Mama, it was your urging that caused me to consent."

"I cannot understand," said Mrs. Morton, with some asperity, "why you should hold yourself aloof from a

handsome, extremely wealthy, highly bred young man; the richest, most attractive and gentlemanly man you have ever met; and we have never heard aught against him. His reputation as a man of honor I have never heard assailed. Isa, to see you the wife of such a man would make me happy."

"Mother, dear, I would like to make you happy, but could you be happy knowing that I was miserable?"

"Miserable, my daughter? Why miserable? Would it not make you happy to be the wife of a rich and handsome man?"

"No, mama, dear; it would not unless I loved him, and could honor him above all other men."

"Is there any reason why you could not love and honor Marcus Chesterfield?"

"Perhaps not, as you look at it, mama; at least, I do not know of any; but I certainly do not love him."

"Of course, not yet; for he has not proposed. But you may love him when the proper time comes. I have had experience enough in my past life to know that he will soon propose; and, surely, you cannot be so blind to your own interests, and my happiness, as to refuse him. Isa, I little thought that such honor would ever be conferred on you, the daughter of a lodging and boarding-house keeper. To be sure I was once the heiress to a million myself, was a belle and moved in the best society, but that was long ago, before you can remember. My dear, you do not even remember how your father looked, do you?"

"Yes, mother. I recall him very faintly indeed, and when I look at Mr. Chesterfield, I seem, for the moment, to be a little child once more and he—my father—he must have looked very much like Mr. Chesterfield?"

"Yes," replied the mother, musingly; "he did. Father and son could not resemble each other more; but your father, dear, was an English nobleman; or, at least, I so supposed him to be. I well remember my delight when he proposed to me. He said that his fortunes were fallen but that his honor and good name were untarnished. We were married, and for two years I was happier than the happiest. You were born, Isa, and I foolishly thought that misfortune could never touch

me. When you were three years of age the great calamity fell. Your father came home one day, wild and dishevelled, saying that all was lost. He, an Englishman, did not understand the ways of Wall Street. He had invested largely in mining stocks, railroad bonds and what not, confidently expecting to quadruple his money; but, instead, had lost all, or nearly all. Some few thousands were left to you and me, the rest was irretrievably lost. He acted like one bereft of reason. That night he disappeared, and I have never seen or heard of him since. All this happened in the city of New York, dear, as you know. I could not remain there; I must go forth and try to find him, so I thought. I traveled here, there and everywhere, for a year, but obtained no clue to his whereabouts. By the time I reached San Francisco I became entirely disheartened. The climate there was so disagreeable that I kept on to Los Angeles. I had but a few thousands left now; the summer sun was so blazing that the cool Pacific enticed me; I purchased this house, dear, and the acre of land on which it stands, and then I had a few hundreds left. If I must earn my own support and yours, I thought the easiest way would be to turn my home into a summer boarding and lodging house. To be sure it has made us comfortable. We have not been cold, hungry, or shelterless, and I have been enabled, thereby, to give you a good education; but this property will be your only portion; then, Isa, how can you think of refusing the immense wealth that might be yours?"

"But, mama, it was your wealth that, at last, caused your sorrows, disappointments, and worse than widowhood. We do not even know whether my father is dead or alive. I can never be happier than I have been here with you, mama, and it is no disgrace to keep a small, quiet hotel, such as this is—a little home-like hotel—you know I never call it a boarding-house. I always say small, private hotel."

"Well, it is all one and the same thing. I earn my living by keeping summer boarders from Los Angeles—travelers from the Eastern States who visit California—and so forth; but I would like my daughter to marry

one who could reinstate us both—one who could put you into the position once occupied by your mother."

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated Isa. "Do you wish me to be left worse than widowed, and my child, if I should have one, fatherless?"

"Certainly not!" said Mrs. Morton with great emphasis. "Certainly not! What could put such a thought into your head? I think if the money your father lost had belonged to himself, and I had been comparatively poor, he would not have disappeared."

"Mama, I believe money to be the root of all unhappiness and evil. If you and my father had both been in poverty, and had your own way to make, you might have lived happily together until the present time; I should have had a father, you the protecting care of a husband; and you might not have been obliged to keep a private hotel. Now,I don't know how it is, mama, dear, but I like almost anything better than riches. I feel a secret antipathy toward the very wealthy. I think this little hotel is all right. I should be willing to keep one myself if I were to marry a gentleman who had very little but himself to offer me."

"Oh! Isa, why will you not look upon Mr. Chesterfield's suit with favorable eyes? Your low-down ideas cause me great unhappiness."

"Because I cannot, first of all; also, I do not love him; and, moreover, I distrust him greatly. There must be an undercurrent of badness in his nature or I should not feel thus when in his presence; and there is something else about him, mama, that I do not pretend to understand. I only wish I could. Whenever he approaches me, I sense the presence of a tall, dark-eyed lady; I do not see her with my natural eyes, and yet she is as real to me as though I did. Her eyes are weird and black. If I try to look at him, I am looking at her instead. If he speaks to me, she speaks to me. Her voice may be inaudible to others, but I am conscious of what she says. If he tells me I am beautiful, her lips curl scornfully as she says, 'he tells me the same,' and yet we are not at all alike. When I am dancing with him, her form is between us—she is nearer to him than I am—and I feel that I must certainly take

my seat, and have done so a number of times, very much to his chagrin I am sure. Of course I could not tell him of this, for it is something invisible to all others but myself. Mama, he is not an honorable or true-hearted man. I feel sure of that, although no one says aught against him."

"You are jealous, Isa. There is not a young lady about here who resembles in the least the person, or rather the imaginary being, you describe. I beg of you not to give way to such foolish fancies—and, even if some young lady were in love with him, it would be nothing strange—he is very fine looking and exceedingly wealthy. Young ladies, as a rule, are not proof against rich, fine looking men. It does not go to prove that he may be in love also, Isa. I feel sure that he loves you and you alone; and you will find that mother is right."

"Well, thank heaven, he has not asked me to marry him yet. I will not trouble myself about it until he does, which may never happen, as I most devoutly hope it will not. I intend to avoid him as much as possible that he may never find an opportunity. Mama, perhaps he never even thought of such a thing. I am sure a hotel keeper's daughter is not in his station of life; he will, probably, seek a wealthy lady—one who has wealth and station equal to his own—and may I dance at his wedding," saying which, Isa arose and sought her couch.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TALKING SPECTRE.

The mother sat, still musing, gazing into the blazing coals within the grate, sighing disappointedly at her daughter's lack of ambitious desires.

"My will has, thus far, been her law," she thought. "A more obedient daughter never lived. She has been as pliant wax in my hands. This is the first time she has ever expressed an opinion differing from mine. I must overrule her for her own good. She shall obey me in this matter—am I not her mother? And is it not God's express command that children should obey their parents? She shall not throw herself away on a poor and unknown suitor. I am determined she shall marry this exceedingly wealthy young man. If all accounts are true he is destined to become a second Vanderbilt. Mr. Chesterfield, the father of Marcus, not only left his son a cool million, but one of the richest mines in all California; and that is what brings the son here; he is personally overseeing the mine. I have been informed, by those who know all about such things, that the mine will yield many millions more. Oh! How can Isabel be so blind to her own interests? But she is ignorant of the world—scarcely ever having left Redondo. We have not been rich enough to travel very much; a little trip to San Diego and Coranado; and once, or twice, to Catalina Island; once to Mount Lowe; about ten or a dozen visits to Los Angeles; and once, only, to San Francisco; this is all the child really knows of the world. She has always been very innocent and unsophisticated; but, here and now, this must end; she must become a woman and be made to comprehend the difference between the rich and the poor. She will really yield to my wishes, as she always has done, when she finds that she must. It rests with her, now, whether my dreams will ever be realized or not.

"Here I am but forty years of age—oh, how much I may enjoy before I reach sixty—and, really, one is not

a very old lady before sixty, and I have seen those who could enjoy much even after that age. Now let me see what Isa's marriage to young Chesterfield would lead to. A princely home in New York, the city of my birth and home of my girlhood, a beautiful mansion on the Hudson, a few years of travel in the old world—and I should visit all the places of note or interest on the globe—in all probability be introduced to the Queen and her court—enjoy all this world can give, have a retinue of servants at my command; all this as the mother of Marcus Chesterfield's wife I shall be entitled to, for Isa will be sure to see that I have all that she does, and more if possible. Even as it is, she relieves me of the greater part of the care of this house. She manages the servants far better than I can already, young as she is. The best of everything is for mother. Then, she is so capable, she seems to understand intuitively just how everything should be done; and she sees that it is done, and done well.

"Oh, yes; when she becomes the wife of a millionaire, wealth, honor and happiness will be mine; my dreams will all be at last realized through her. My own young womanhood was one of bitter sorrow and disappointment. At last I shall meet with a just recompense."

Her eyes closed with the happy thought; and, immediately, as she supposed, they opened to stare with astonishment at a figure standing by the other side of the small fireplace, one arm resting lightly on the mantle, the large, dark, weird eyes holding hers in a resistless spell.

The form was that of a handsome young woman, perhaps twenty-one or two years of age; dark haired, regular featured and pale. She carried with her a look of determination. She spoke, or at least Mrs. Morton thought so.

"So you are determined to marry your daughter to Marcus Chesterfield, whether she will or no. Madam, are you not reckoning without your host? You have not yet taken me into consideration. I shall most certainly object to the union."

"And who are you, pray, that you thus intrude upon

me in my own private apartments? What one of my servants has dared admit you here, at this time of night, without first consulting me?"

"O, I have not asked your servants to admit me," said the weird lady, airily: "I did not consult them about it."

"But the doors and windows of this house are all fastened, or, certainly should be. My housekeeper has never failed in this respect before. I must positively discharge her for her carelessness."

"Your doors and windows are all fastened, madam. You are not called upon to discharge your housekeeper. She is a jewel, no doubt. I did not enter here through barred doors or windows and yet I am here as you see; and, now that I am here, I wish to converse with you on a subject of very great importance to myself."

"I must know, first, how you entered this room."

"Because I willed to do so."

"What has that to do with it," asked Mrs. Morton, "if my servants did not obey your will and admit you?"

"Nevertheless, they did not, I assure you. By my strength of will power I have overcome all material obstacles, and, consequently, stand before you."

"You are falsifying!" cried Mrs. Morton, indignantly, "and to carry your own point are screening my servants, or some one of them."

"You are wrong; but we will not quarrel about it. My mission here is too important to waste time on so trivial a subject. Something far more important engrosses my mind just now. Are you aware, madam, that the human will can overcome all obstacles that may intervene or rise up to obstruct or thwart it?"

"No: I do not know it, neither do I believe it."

"Then you are not willing to believe your own eyes and ears? But, I pray, let us not waste words. Madam, your daughter shall not marry Marcus Chesterfield!"

"Shall not? Your impudence is unparalleled, whoever you are. Shall not? And, who can prevent it, pray, if the parties most concerned are agreed?"

"And who, may I ask, are the parties most concerned?"

"Marcus Chesterfield, my daughter and myself; his parents both being dead."

"Both being dead?" laughed the weird lady. "Dead, madam? There is no such thing as death."

"We will not split hairs on that question," said Mrs. Morton. "They have departed this life, and, no doubt, are angels before the throne of God; at least, we will hope so. There is no one to object to my daughter's union with her just as good as affianced husband. Who you may be, does not matter. A jealous woman, no doubt, who desires to win him for herself. He told me, with his own lips, that he was entirely free—had never, even, spoken of love to any woman, as yet, in his short life—for he is very young, not quite twenty-two,—and that no woman has held his promise of marriage; he told me all this when asking my consent to paying his addresses to my daughter, for I questioned him, particularly, on the subject."

"I did not say that he had engaged himself to me. I spoke of the human will; and I will that he shall engage himself to me. My will being the stronger will, can conquer his."

"You must be some brazen hussy—some unprincipled adventuress—to use such language to me, or to anyone; or, even, to harbor such thoughts. Marcus Chesterfield told me that he loved no one but my daughter. You impudent, and, no doubt, vile woman; how dare you talk of willing a gentleman to engage himself, in marriage, to you?"

"I dare to do any and all things that I wish to do; and I will set the power of my will against yours; and there shall be a wrestling of the powers of our wills, and mine shall conquer yours; be sure of that. Your daughter is no more than a straw in my path. Marcus has no particular will of his own. My conquest over him will be easy. You are the real obstacle in my way; and you I will overcome or rend in pieces. Marcus Chesterfield, and his millions, shall be mine; and no power on earth, or in heaven, shall thwart me."

"I defy you!" cried Mrs. Morton, with flaming eyes and cheeks. "You shall be as a reed in my hands, and I will bend and break you. My daughter shall marry Marcus Chesterfield, and you shall not. If it, as you say, is a question of the power of one human will over

that of another, then my will shall conquer. We will fight it out to the bitter end."

"To the bitter end it shall then be," said the intruder, becoming pale as the dead. "I am possessed of a power that you know not of—a power which you lack—oh, never fear; I shall be the victor!" and the weird eyes glittered like those of a basalisk. "Do not attempt to thwart me, I warn you; for if you do, you and your daughter both will wish you had never been born. I came here tonight on purpose to warn you. I would gain my ends without resorting to this power, if I could; but if I cannot, then beware! I shall not hesitate to use it"; and the eyes that gazed into those of Mrs. Morton's glittered like a deadly serpent's.

Mrs. Morton sprang from her chair; the eyes still glared into her own, and the serpentine form of the creature approached her, waving its thin hands before her face, until each finger upon them seemed like ten wreathing snakes ready to dart their forked tongues in her face.

"Sit down!" again commanded the creature, in a hissing whisper. "Sit down! I warn you not to oppose me, or you shall suffer the consequences of your own folly! Sit down, and hear me out. Give up all hopes of Marcus Chesterfield's wedding your daughter, and all shall go well with you: If not, I will encompass the ruin and downfall of yourself and Isabel. Do not call into activity a subtle power which you cannot hope to compete with or overcome. We shall meet again."

Mrs. Morton sank back into her chair, paralyzed in every limb, utterly unable to remove her eyes from those of the basalisk; the creature, in the meanwhile, slowly retreated to the farther end of the room, waving its slender hands, with their dreadful fingers; never taking the glittering, serpentine eyes from the victim, until it gradually vanished from her sight. The room was not dark, for the fire still blazed within the grate, and a small night lamp burned steadily upon the dressing table; no door had opened, no window had been raised, yet the figure was gone, and Mrs. Morton found herself alone.

"O! This is dreadful!" she exclaimed. "What is the

matter? Have I been dreaming—in one of those horrible nightmares?" She arose from her chair, shook herself, bathed her heated head and burning cheeks in cold water. She put forth her hand to ring for the maid, but desisted.

"It will be of little use," she said. "I really am not ill and they will say that I fell asleep in my chair, through fatigue, and it was all the effect of a nightmare. I am unwilling to tell what caused my fright. It will be the better way not to mention this dream, or whatever it may be, to anyone. Can it have been produced by the few remarks which Isabel made regarding an imaginary woman, who constantly appeared between her and her lover?

"Goodness-gracious! It is two o'clock, already. I shall appear a fright if I do not get some rest and sleep," and the good lady immediately retired.

CHAPTER VII.

HIDDEN FORCES.

The spectre went with its hands clasped over its throbbing heart; the gleaming eyes and pale face were turned upward toward the heavenly vault. A sigh escaped its lips. Not one of regret—oh, no; but one of intense determination.

Let our souls come en-rapport with this soul, that we may understand its language. Thoughts are things; let us follow the gleam of the moving figure, and look at the trail of thoughts it leaves in its wake.

"This it is to understand the secrets of nature. This it is to understand how to separate the soul and spirit from the more material body. Here am I, a living soul, out in this starry night. I am not obliged to walk wearily back to my body, but can float easily and gracefully along. The night is cold but I am not, for the magnetic and electric currents meet within me and warm my soul. This it is to know I cannot die. Even though this earth were to vanish forever beneath me, still, here am I, and I live. Even if those heavens, with all their countless hosts, were to roll up as a scroll, still would I be here. That body, lying yonder in that dwelling, is senseless and still. Some might say it slept, for the breath of life is still within it, but I am not. Intense desires lure me away from it. My soul wills, and my spirit obeys. If I must yet be confined within that prison house of clay, I will move like a queen upon the earth. Wealth and power I will have, and nothing shall hinder me. If the earth yields treasures of gold and diamonds, I will find a way to make them mine.

"While I must inhabit that form of clay, I will deck it in glittering gems. I will clothe it in velvets, laces, silks and satins, costly beyond compare.

"I have visited, in this my astral form, the mines belonging to Marcus Chesterfield, and I have found the wealth of Golconda hidden within them; riches—riches untold. He does not even dream of the wealth that will

yet be his, and but for this secret power, which I possess, I could not know of these things.

"Does that baby face and her mother, think to thwart me? They might as well think to move yonder mountain from its base. I care no more for the girl than I do for a wisp of straw; but the mother requires all my subtle force. If necessary, I must search nature for more subtle forces still.

"Love me? Does Marcus love me? What is love? I must understand it fully in order that I may conquer. 'Two souls and one idea; two hearts and but one throb'? Very poetic, truly; but more of poetry than truth. The ideas of my soul are far beyond those of Marcus Chesterfield's. My heart throbs are full, fast and furious; his are slow, and rhythmic. My fluttering, palpitating heart, finds a resting place within his more slowly beating one. I wish to fly, but like the dove in the fabled ark, come back to rest on firmer ground. Love? What is it? Attraction? Hardly. One is attracted to many that one does not love. Love is a myth—a fable—a blind God. I will have nothing to do with a blind God. My God shall be all-seeing, all-hearing, all-knowing; for I am, at this moment, my own God, able to see and understand all with whom I come in contact. Others may worship the blind God, if they choose, but I never will. I will blind others and compel them to do my bidding.

"When I have conquered Marcus Chesterfield, and, thereby, become possessed of his enormous wealth, I shall have the means of traveling all over this vast globe—a queen in my own right—and be sure, my soul, I will queen it over all that are worth my time and attention: Lords and Ladies shall bow to my sceptre, for I have made myself acquainted with the great secret wherewith to rule all; even inanimate things run at my bidding, and much of the unseen world is under my feet. Do I not compel them to work for me, to help me on toward fame and fortune?"

"Be quiet, now, soaring spirit; fold up thy wings; beat more slowly, palpitating heart, for thy prison house awaits thee. Take up that senseless form once more, for it must serve thee well.

"Here is its chamber; here is its bed; poor and lowly at present, for the spirit has but just begun to soar."

Pause here, my friends. Watch the gleam as it shimmers, for a moment, against the wall of that little old house; all lonely and desolate, far out on the sands, but a little above high water mark; in plain sight of the bench where Mark Chester sat a few hours ago.

See; the gleam has disappeared within the walls of that lonely cot. Let us, also, enter.

There are but three rooms within it; a living and sleeping room, together with a small kitchen. Upon the bed, in the sleeping apartment, we discover a slumbering form; the exact counterpart of the airy, floating figure we have been following. Is this a dead form? It resembles one very much. But, no. Although the pallor of death is on the face, and the body is rigid, still a faint breath escapes the livid lips and we notice the heart flutters slightly. Observe; the gleam hovers over it; gradually it is drawn down out of our sight; the breathing becomes stronger; the lips take on a little color; the heart ceases to flutter and beats with regularity; the rigid limbs become supple once more; the girl moves; opens her eyes and looks about her; and, as we can learn nothing more, just now, we will retire and leave her to her own thoughts.

We go forth into the bright, clear moonlight. It is now two o'clock. The New Year is two hours old; 1899 is already two hours old—a sweet, pure cherub, as yet.

Here, on Redondo beach, how clear the atmosphere; how bright and clean the face of the moon; how the stars glitter. The peaceful Pacific sends its waves, with a soft boom, against the shore. Apparently every soul in the small city is asleep. We know that all those of whom we have spoken are asleep, even the last one, for the girl soon slept again; this time the spirit resting with the body.

Three hours more, when the cherub is five hours old, the activity of life will commence once more. Would that all the thoughts and actions of human beings could be as pure, calm, and peaceful as this innocent hour; but such we know will not be the case.

As we are spirits, already freed from the flesh, feeling

not the cold, neither needing sleep, let us pause quietly here and summon other souls to keep us company; also, to impart to us strength and ability to accomplish that which we desire to do—and that which we desire to do is to help poor, weak, erring humanity. To ward off evil from the innocent and well disposed; instill pure and good thoughts into the minds of those who wish to wrong others; in fact, to overcome evil with good.

There is no higher mission given to spirits, angels, or men, than to bring order out of chaos, good out of evil, wisdom out of ignorance, love out of hate, heaven out of hell.

Even if there were such a hell as some think and teach, could the angels in heaven find any better employment than saving souls from such a pit of darkness?

Let us introduce the reader to some of the spiritual beings whom we have called to assist us in our good work. First of all, at our earnest desire, floats toward us a lovely woman; beautiful, pure and sweet as the angels are. This is Molly, the guardian spirit of Nathan Kester. And here comes a sweet and gentle lady, the safeguard and mother of Mark Chester. And this rather sorrowful, regretful soul, or spirit, is the father of Marcus Chesterfield. Now let your enraptured eyes gaze, for a moment, on this lovely, angelic maiden; so pure, so sweet, so innocent, and withal so wise. She passed to the spirit world before the taint of sin or folly ever touched her; but the lessons which earth and material life can teach must be learned by this pure being, in order that wisdom may sit enthroned on that dazzling brow; therefore is she appointed, by natural law, to be the guardian spirit and soul companion of sweet Isabel Morton. And here stands a stately woman who was once, when on earth, an ambitious and wicked Queen. Her grand and noble nature is not yet purified from the heavy dross of earth. She still desires to be a queen. She still desires to animate a human form, and as she cannot reincarnate herself once more, she loves to attach herself to some fine-looking, ambitious woman, that she may again and again enjoy the pomp and sensual pleasures of earth. How many times she will do this, before her soul emerges into the glowing light of goodness, holi-

ness and perfect purity, none can tell. She stands before us now more of earth than of heaven, and yet a spirit. Her appearance is exceedingly brilliant and dazzling, but we feel, as we look at her, that she is not at rest—not at peace—that she is not wholly pure or good; still, whatever the soul desires it attracts to itself.

There she stands before us, blazing in jewels and precious stones, clothed in rose-colored satin and golden ornaments of various kinds. Her eyes are large, brilliant, and dark; her hair long, thick, and black as the wing of a raven; her form full and exceedingly voluptuous. She likes to be with us occasionally, but her eyes speak more of disdain than love.

This soul has attached herself, for the present, to Mrs. Morton; for she loves to conquer untoward conditions and work out her own will. She may, thus, at last, work out her own salvation. Let us hope so, at least.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MORNING BREAKS.

The New Year's morn is breaking. The moon has set. A cold, chilly fog has obscured the twinkling stars. Not one is now visible. All is dull, cold and gray. The night is dead. The day still lingers. The cold, gray, dead night is wrapped in a dim, winding sheet of fog; a fitting symbol of the present age in which the whole world is struggling, trying to pierce the fog which is the winding sheet of the night of ignorance, that still hides the glory of the coming day. But, see! A gleam of golden light shoots upward over yonder mountain. The dawn of day is not far behind and the warm and glorious sun will soon follow.

"Hello!" Mr. Kester starts up from his snug bunk, under the seat in the stern of his boat, rubs his sleepy eyes and yawns.

"I hev got ter git out o' this," he mutters. "Hed no idee 'twas mornin'. Them thar fellers hes cum arter the yaller-tails, sure as yer live.

"Hullo, thar! Be with yer in a minit," and his long legs are soon seen dangling over the side of the Molly, then he jumps to the sands and confronts an old, knock-kneed, white horse, standing shakily, with blinking, half-shut, sleepy eyes. The horse is attached to a covered cart as shaky as himself, and the driver sits on the seat, wrapped in an old coat, smoking a black, stumpy pipe; his bleared eyes are also nearly shut, but there is more speculation in them, when he occasionally lifts the lids, than in those of the horse.

"Hello, Kister! How's Molly an' the yaller-tails this mornin'?"

"An' howdy, yerself. Molly's spankin', yew bet; an' ef I ketched one yaller-tail yisterday I ketched two hunderd—croakers, pouts, an' a lot o' halibut thrown in," and Mr. Kester sauntered proudly toward the pile of large, long fish, taking one in each hand and holding them up for inspection.

"How many'll yer take, this mornin', pard? Mayn't hev another sich a haul in a long time, yer know."

"Wall, now, let me see," and the speculative eyes opened somewhat. "This yer day is New Year. It's ninty nine, Kister, as sure's fate, an' another year'll make it nineteen hundred. Well, seein' as how it's a holiday, I'll take the whole o' them yaller-tails, an' ye can throw in a lot o' them croakers, pouts, an' halibut. Throw 'um all in—ye can afford to, fur I'll buy the yaller-tails, an' pay ye a good price fur 'um, too."

"Do yer see any thing green, Howsler? Fer ef yer dew, yer mus' be lookin' at them thar pepper trees, up on ther bank, yender, an' not at Nat Kister. Yer kin hev jist as many fish as yer pay fur, an' no more, nor no less. Do yer see them thar little shanties over thar? Wall, ef I hev got anythin' ter give away, I'll give it ter them thar poor, hungry people, instid of a bloat like you be. Come, now; jump down an' lend a hand, will yer?"

"No; arn yer money yerself, Kister. Pile in them yaller-tails, an' mind there's not one short."

Mr. Kester immediately commenced piling, and presently the "yaller-tails" were in the cart, and two shining, ten dollar gold pieces were transferred from the pocket of Mr. Howsler to the palm of Mr. Kester's hand.

"There you are!"

"Drive on yer cart! Hope yer'll sell um all, Howsler."

"They'r all spoken for a'ready. Hope ye'll spend a happy New Year. Git up there, old Jock! There's the sun a'ready, ye lazy beast!" and the old horse labored wheezily, the wheels grated in the sand, the spokes rattled like castanets in unskilful hands, and soon the cart, horse and driver were on higher ground, wending their way onward. Mr. Kester clinked the money together in his pocket:

"Thet thar wus a good day's work," he said, turning toward Molly. "Yer a stanch ole boat, Molly, an' ye arned yer share o' the money. Gess we'll stay ashore ter day, bein' as 'tis New Year Now, yer look thar, Molly. Thar's a good pile o' fish left now, my black-eyed beauty. Tell me what'd yer think I'd better do with it? What's that yer say, Molly? Guv it ter the poor, an' hungry, an' them as needs it? Is thet the kind

o' a gal yer be, ter advise me ter guv away my hard arned fish? Did yer know, Molly, thet that thar fish would bring another V jest by takin' it up to thet thar hotel? Another five would make my airnings yisterday count up ter fifteen dollar', an' yer jist advise me ter guv um away. Perhaps yer right, Molly. Them poor, little chilern, over thar, is hungry, jist as yer say, an' them fathers can't ketch no fish, 'cause they hes no boats—nary a boat, Molly, hes nary one o' them. Yer a fortin in yerself, my beauty. Them mothers, an' hungry chilern 'll thank ye, no doubt. Let me see, Molly, how things stand with us? Ten dollar' fur you, Molly, an' ten fur me, an' five fur them as is hungry. Yer right, Molly, darlin', an' yer always right, an' thet settles it.

"Thet thar sun's up later'n I am. She's jist throwin' off ther last sheet o' fog frum her bright face. Her mornin' kisses 'll soon be too ardint fur them thar croakers, an' 'll do the pouts no good, nether; let me see, now, how many 'll Molly an' I want? One, two, three; thet 'll do fur me—an' Molly, poor girl, kin help ter ketch um better'n eat um. What's thet yer say, Molly? Be all ther more fur them as is hungry? All right, my beauty! Whar's thet thar baskit, Molly? Yer jist hidin' it away here under ther bow. Suppose yer tho't yer'd like ter keep it clean an' dry. Thet's jist like yer, my good gal."

And with these words Mr. Kester proceeded to fill the basket with the remaining pouts, croakers, and halibut, wrapping three goodly sized fish in a wet towel, and laying them carefully under the small seat at the bow of the boat, whence he had taken the basket. He then donned a pair of pants, the legs of which were of a respectable length, a clean flannel shirt, and a long, coarse, warm coat, together with a respectable hat; then, taking the basket of fish on his arm, he wended his way toward a collection of huts, tents, and shanties, about a quarter of a mile down the coast, where the poverty stricken, the halt and the blind resided.

This place contained about one hundred souls; men, women and children, in all the various stages of miserable existence; ragged, dirty, and sore-eyed—no doubt

caused by the blinding rays of the hot sun on the shining, white sands of the beach.

Extreme poverty makes many shifts for food and shelter. Some of these shanties were built out of old hogsheads and barrel staves, such as had fallen to pieces and could be bought for a song. Others were of old boards, cast aside from the wharves as worthless; but do not suppose for one moment, my kind sir, or madam, that the aforesaid lumber was given to these suffering human beings. Oh, no; they must pay for it, no matter how worthless it might be—and the shanties thus built from it were considered almost palatial by those who could not afford, to buy even as good. Then there were small filthy looking, old tents, battered and worn, patched and repatched, and other little shanties hardly larger than dog-kennels. Stretching, at intervals, along the beach, were seats of rough, black boards, so worn and shaky they were hardly able to sustain the weight of one who would rest thereon. While Mr. Kester is still walking toward these habitations, we will take a view of this glorious California landscape.

The sun has just risen over yonder hills in glorious splendor, such splendor as only a Southern California atmosphere can give, for the atmosphere is as clear as it is possible for atmosphere to be; the hills are tinged with the brightest of purple and gold, the valleys, as yet, lying a little in shadow. The western horizon is also burning in silver, orange, purple and gold; not a cloud to be seen throughout the vast dome of the opaline sky. The gentle waves of the Pacific, glinting in the rays of the rapidly rising sun, undulating on, and on, and ever on, until, as it were, they are met and kissed by Eternity.

Scarcely a sail can be discerned on this boundless ocean.

"O!" one exclaims involuntarily. "What vast possibilities are here!" Now look once more toward the northeast and behold the immense groves of orange and lemon trees. This is the time of year when the oranges are ripe, and they are hanging thickly among the shining, dark green leaves, like golden balls.

Although it is New Year's day, the birds are singing as blithely to the rising sun as though it were spring time

in a colder clime. The lawns around the better class of houses are as green as possible, and as smooth as velvet carpets; roses are in full bloom; all kinds of beautiful flowers and vines are trailing over verandas, fences, and outhouses. There are a number of green terraces at the back of the grand hotel where Mark Chester is sleeping at this moment; and immense beds of the most gorgeous flowers are in front of it, as well as about it everywhere.

"Paradise!" do you say?

Surely, paradise can be no more beautiful or gorgeous.

But the guests at the hotel have not yet risen, and the employees are busy preparing the bountiful breakfast. Smoke is just beginning to rise from Mrs. Morton's private hotel, that is, we would say from the chimney of that exclusive lodging and boarding house, just far enough distant from the grand hotel to nestle beneath its patronizing wings, for when one would like to be very, very exclusive, and very, very retiring, one found Mrs. Morton's private hotel very much to one's taste, especially if one did not care to be in full dress for most of the time, which is often quite irksome, particularly to those ladies who have passed the flirtation period.

The smoke is rising lazily from the chimney of this most exclusive abode; but the mother and daughter are both still wrapped in slumber.

CHAPTER IX.

JANE ERIE EXPRESSES HER OPINIONS.

Mr. Nathaniel Kester has now arrived at his destination, and a crowd of men, women and children surround him.

It is evident that he is well known here. He places the basket on a bench and takes his seat beside it.

"Happy New Year! Happy New Year!" comes from a score of voices.

"Nice basket of fish, that," says one with longing eyes. "Oh, aint them beauties?" says another, hungrily. "Old Kister beats um all at fishing," says another covetously. "But he's generous wi' um," quavers an old woman whose gaunt form and hollow cheeks speak of famine.

"Here, mother, take this ere biggest one," says Nathaniel, holding it forth.

"Oh, thank ye! Thank ye! May the holy virgin an' all the saints bless ye, Mr. Kister! But I am that hungry I can hardly wait for it to be cooked."

A half dozen children huddled about the old woman whom they called "granny." "Take this," she said to the eldest of them, "and tell yer marm to cook it quick, for we are all nearly starved to death."

The children ran on with the fish to one of the huts, and the grandame hobbled after.

A fair young mother passed slowly by, with her infant in her arms.

"Oh, Mr. Kester!" she sobbed, "Jack has a broken leg and we have nothing to eat."

Another fish was handed forth; and so, one after another, they passed by, until but one fish remained within the basket.

"I must save this fur her as lives up yender," said Mr. Kester, bobbing his head in the direction of the lone house where we have been before, and amid blessings and thanks, he arose and turned his face in the direction of the cottage. Having arrived there, he discreetly knocked. The door was opened by a woman of middle

age who certainly had seen better days. Mr. Kester took off his hat to her, bowing clumsily.

"I hope ter find yer well this mornin', marm."

"I am quite well, thank you, Mr. Kester."

"How is yer darter, marm?"

"She is also well, for ought I know. She must be sleeping still, I think, although she is usually a very early riser."

"It is New Year's day, marm, an' I tho't as how yer darter an' yerself might like a little present. It's nothin' but a fish, marm; but fishes air purty good when yer hungry. Not thet I mean thet you might be hungry, marm. In course I didn't mean that; but Molly thar, yer see, she wanted ter make ye a New Year's present, an' Molly thinks a lot o' fishes an' fishin', yer know, marm, an' sometimes she kin spare a few jest as well as not."

The lady smiled, and taking the large, fine halibut, she thanked Mr. Kester again and again.

"We are nearly penniless now," she said in a faint voice, "but it has not always been thus. I should not care to have Jannie know that I accepted alms; still, it is for her sake that I do so."

"Oh, no alms, no alms at all, marm, jest a present on New Year's morn," and Mr. Kester sauntered back to Molly.

Presently he had a little fire kindled, his fish broiled, his coffee made, himself seated eating his breakfast with a relish.

* * * * *

Mrs. Erie knocked at the door of her daughter's room: "Jannie, dear, it is time to get up."

"Yes, mother."

"Mother wishes you a happy New Year through the key hole."

"I wish I could think it would be," murmured the daughter, opening her door. "But what is the use, mother, of wishing you a happy New Year, when I know that you are not happy—that you cannot be happy under our present distressing circumstances. Happy, with poverty and starvation staring us in the face? I am not happy, mother, but exceedingly miserable."

"Well, dress as quickly as you can, dear. Mother has something nice for your breakfast."

"Something nice! It is useless to tell me that! Where would it be possible for you to get anything nice? We had nothing last evening for supper but a dry crust and a cup of cold water. On New Year's eve, too. Just think of that!" and Jane got herself into her clothes with a frown.

Nathaniel Kester had laid the fine, large halibut down upon the table, and, all unobserved by Mrs. Erie, he had smuggled a packet of coffee behind it.

"Dear, good old soul!" exclaimed that lady on discovering it. "What a nice New Year's breakfast we shall have to be sure. I am truly thankful that heaven has not forgotten us."

She had spoken aloud in her surprise on finding the coffee. Jane, just emerging from her door, heard her mother's remark.

"Old Kester has been here," said she, scornfully. "Oh, mother, mother! We have fallen low, very low indeed, when we are forced to accept alms from an ignorant old fisherman. I would much rather starve."

Mrs. Erie was busily cutting slices from the fish and laying them within the hot frying-pan over the small stove; and the odor of fragrant coffee filled the room.

"Jannie, dear, lay the table and we will soon have a good breakfast. Daughter, sweet, mother is very hungry. Come and kiss me, Jane. Aren't you glad, love, to have a good breakfast this New Year's morn?"

"Breakfast! Breakfast!" sneered Jane. "One would think you never thought of anything else but eating. No, I am not glad of a miserable breakfast of fish, bestowed upon us as alms by a dirty old fisherman. I am thankful that I was not in the room when he came. O mother! you have not the spirit of a mouse. If you had, we should not be in such poverty."

And she scornfully switched the cloth upon the table. The gentle mother sighed as she turned the fish.

"I think you are right, Jannie, dear," she said. "I never had much spirit and what little I may once have had, has been considerably broken."

"Broken, indeed!" snapped Jane. "Why have you al-

lowed your spirit to be broken? Mother, the human will is everything. Your spirit need not be broken if you will it otherwise," and Jane placed the plates upon the table very decisively.

"Well, perhaps not," replied Mrs. Erie, tears of regret dimming the mild blues eyes. "I am well aware, dearie, that I am greatly lacking in force of character; but you, Jannie, are like your father. He had purpose and will enough for two."

"Where is my father?" asked Jane, rattling the cups and saucers together irritably.

"Heaven alone can tell. I know not."

"Why did you not find out?" asked Jane, cutting the remaining half of the stale loaf, otherwise called a crust.

"As he saw fit to desert me, I did not think it best to trouble myself about him."

"More likely it was because you were so weak spirited. If I had been in your place, I would have followed him to the ends of the earth. I would have compelled him to do as he ought—or as I thought he ought—it would be one and the same thing."

"Your father was not one to be compelled in any way, or by any one, no matter who; much less by his wife, whom he thought must obey him in all things."

"No man living shall ever compel my obedience," said Jane, taking the steaming coffee from the stove. "But my husband shall obey me in all things, even to the smallest detail."

"But, Jannie, you may never be so fortunate as to get a husband," and Mrs. Erie took the richly browned fish from the pan, laying the slices daintily upon the platter which she carefully placed upon the table.

"Never get a husband, mother? You ought to know me better. Can you possibly think me so devoid of will, that I shall never get a husband? I will not only get a husband, but I will get one as rich as was the king of Lydia, Croesus, and instead of being the wretched, poverty stricken creature that your weak will has made me, I will move through the world a very queen. I will grasp millions with this small hand. Men and women shall bow down to me, and I will place this little foot upon their necks and crush the life out of them if they

do not obey my will," and as she grasped her mother's wrist with that small hand, it seemed like a vise of steel. As she stamped with that little, slender foot, the room trembled and the dishes rattled.

"O Jannie!" gasped the mother, "you frighten me."

"Frighten you? It don't take much to frighten such weak creatures as yourself. Fear and weakness are no part of my nature, mother, and if they were, I would wring the neck of fear and chase weakness back to her lair. Fear and weakness are abominable to me."

The mother's pale, delicate features grew paler still as she listened to her daughter.

"But, Jannie," objected Mrs. Erie, "in order to get a rich husband, it would be necessary for us to move in good society—to keep up the appearance of being comparatively wealthy, even if we were not, and for you to dress with becoming elegance. We are not able to do any of these things. This house is but a mean cottage of three rooms—scarcely more than a shed. At the end of this month we may not have even this shelter, for I have no more money to pay the rent; the best dress you have is of the cheapest material and not at all becoming."

"Say no more, mother, or I shall rave at you—weak willed creature that you are! Why have you not provided your child with better things? Why did you bring me into this world to suffer such torture and thus to fling my poverty in my face? Am I to blame that you forced me into this world? Am I to blame that I am what I am? But now that I am here against my wish—not being consulted at all in the matter—I will show you, and the rest of the world, what one woman can do—what one woman will do against all odds."

"But Jannie, love, there are very few rich young men here at Redondo, and I think not any. We cannot leave this small town, for we have no means wherewith to pay our fare to any other place, and nothing to live upon even if we were to leave here. Surely, daughter, it is better for us to remain here than it would be to go to a large city."

"Mother, you are right. I said that I would conquer against all odds. I will stay just here—right where we are, mother. I do not ask you to go hither or thither. If

I cannot conquer and bring to pass my will here in this small town of Redondo, how could I hope to conquer and bring about my desires in a larger place? It is not the place, mother, but the person—the human will—the soul —the spirit of the person."

"But, my child, if there is no exceedingly rich man who is marriageable here, how can you marry him?"

"If there were not such a person here, I would summon one to come here—will one to come here—compel one, even against his own will, if need be." Mrs. Erie stared at her daughter as though she feared she was becoming insane.

"O, you need not look at me like that. I am perfectly sane, and in my right mind, know just what I am talking about. Mother, I am possessed of a power that you know nothing of. You, with your weak will, could not hope to understand me. My spirit transcends my body. My will, or soul power, compels my spirit to obey its behests; consequently, I can will my spirit to leave my body and go wherever I wish it to go. The I, Myself, the Ego, I suppose learned men would call it, rises superior to my spirit or my body, compelling them both to obedience, and whenever I cannot make use of my earthly body to advantage, I leave it and make use of my spiritual form. This enhances my power ten fold."

"O gracious! Jannie, what are you talking of?"

"Did you not hear me, mama? I mean what I say."

"Jane! Jane, my daughter! I hope you have not made a compact with Satan?"

"Not at all, mother. I am merely beginning to understand myself and the power belonging to me, and how to make use of it to my own advantage. I know I am very young yet, else I should have accomplished wonders before this."

"You are scarcely eighteen, Jannie, little more than a child."

"Child I am no longer. Child I do not wish to be. You may be my child, mother, if it will please you, and you shall see how I will make you obey me, something which you could never make me do."

"I have always tried to rule you through love, Jannie.

You have never been a bad child; a little wilful and headstrong, perhaps, but not bad in any sense."

"I will not rule by love," cried Jane, "but by the power of my will."

"I hope, dear, that you will always try to do right. I have endeavored from your earliest childhood to instil right principles within your mind."

"Right or wrong, mother, I will conquer. Right or wrong, I will do what I please. I will not live in poverty. I will not go hungry. I will not dress in rags or mean apparel. The world is before me and I will conquer it. It shall yield to me that which I desire. Nothing shall stand in my way. Nothing shall hinder me. You sew for the grand ladies at the hotel, when you can get the work to do, and I have, thus far, helped you as much as I could, besides carrying the work to and fro; by so doing, I have come in close contact with these ladies, mother. They are no better than I am, many of them are not even as good. They snub me—they dare to look down on me. To them, I am nothing but the daughter of their seamstress. How many insults I have borne, you can never know; but I will spurn them yet—wring out their heart's blood"—

"O stop, Jannie! Where will this lead you?"

"It shall lead me to put the world under my feet.

"Mother, there is a young man staying at the hotel—he is rich. I have heard that he will be worth many millions of dollars. He is very wealthy, even now, his father having left him a million or more, besides that exceedingly rich mine you have heard people talk of. All the ladies at the hotel, who have marriageable daughters, are trying to entrap him. They don't ask whether it is right or wrong. Why should I be expected to? Now, mother, I will marry that young man."

"But you may not be his choice. He may not fall in love with you."

"I will be his choice. I will compel his choice. Love I know little about and care nothing for; but, mark it well, mother, I will be his choice."

"But suppose he were really to love another?"

"He loves himself better than he ever can any other; and one who can minister to his self love will, most as-

surely, be his choice; and I shall see to it that he continues to love himself better than anyone else."

"O Jannie—Jannie! This seems all wrong and wicked to me."

"Then all the world is wicked," persisted Jane. "I have studied people far more than you think, mother, and I find those who care only for themselves, and their own advantages, are invariably the ones who prosper; they are always rich, while we are in poverty. Those who have weak wills, invariably go to the wall. Most of those wealthy ladies at the hotel, are very arrogant and self-willed, and they override those who are not as wealthy as themselves."

"But, Jannie, dear; wealth is not everything."

"Is not it? Well, then, my observation is at fault. Do you think there is a person in this town who would not bow down before Marcus Chesterfield in abject humility?"

"Child, I would not, for one; and I am sure that Mr. Nathaniel Kester would not."

"Am I never to hear the last of that old fisherman? That nonentity in the world? A man, or thing, rather, who cannot speak a word of the English language properly? Who looks more like a wild beast, or a bird of prey, than a human being? And you—oh, mother—the very weakest of women—so weak, indeed, that you are on the verge of starvation!"

"But there may be other very good people indeed, those who are not in poverty, who would not bow down to this young millionaire."

"If there are, I have not seen them, and do not believe they exist."

Mrs. Erie sighed deeply. Surely, she thought, her teaching had come to naught with this girl, the being in all the world who lay nearest her heart.

"Mother, they gave a grand ball at the hotel last night —a New Year's Eve ball. Did they invite me—Jane Erie? Did they invite you—Mrs. Erie—to chaperon your daughter Jane?"

"Well, certainly not."

"Why did they not?"

"We do not move in what is called good society."

"Good society? Are we considered bad, then?"

"No—no! Of course not."

"Why don't you say what you mean, mother? Why don't you say, because we are in poverty."

Another sigh from Mrs. Erie.

"Good? There was scarcely a lady at the ball really as good as we are. Wealth, mother! That is the real thing, and your daughter Jane will yet be the queen of the grandest ball that was ever given—and be sure, those who have slighted me now shall bite the dust."

"Was the young man you speak of there?"

"Was Marcus Chesterfield there? I should say he was —and you ought to have seen the sycophants hover around him and smile, and smile, and smile, and fawn upon him. Oh, it was sickening!"

"How can you possibly know about it, Jannie? You were not there."

"Was I not? Indeed, but I was there."

"Was there? What do you mean? You certainly went to bed at nine o'clock, and I looked in upon you a number of times as you slept, thinking you could not be well, as you were so unusually pale."

"O, my body was not there—not this heavy, earthly one, at least, but my spirit and soul were there and I knew and saw everything that was going on; besides, I knew what all those grand ladies and gentlemen were thinking about. Pah! It makes me sick! Your daughter Jane, madam, is an angel compared to some of them."

Mrs. Erie could do nothing but stare in astonishment at her strange child.

"Mother, there was one poor little fool there, I suppose you would call good. She ought to have been your daughter instead of me, while I should have been the daughter of that insolent, haughty woman, her mother."

"Of whom do you speak, Jannie?"

"I speak of Isabel Morton and her mother."

"Isabel Morton? Yes: Isabel is one of the loveliest and sweetest girls I ever knew—the dear little angel! How kind she has often been to me."

"Have you discovered wings on the dear angel, yet, mama? If you were like Mrs. Morton, we should not be

in miserable poverty, and I could win Marcus Chesterfield without putting myself to so much trouble. Mrs. Morton has a greater amount of will power than the other ladies at the hotel, consequently, Marcus Chesterfield is her slave, following the mother and daughter about like a shadow."

"He may be in love with Isabel," suggested Mrs. Erie. "I doubt if any young man could resist such beauty and sweetness."

"Oh, he is a willing captive, I admit; but he is a captive, mother, held in bonds that he will soon break."

"Is he already engaged to Isabel?"

"Not yet; but he intends to be before the day is over."

"Then, Jannie, how can you possibly hope to win him? Besides, it would be very cruel and unjust to Isabel."

"No, mother, it would not be cruel or unjust to Isabel. Isabel cares nothing for him."

"Then she will refuse him."

"I fear not. Perhaps she may, but her weak will counts for nothing. Weak wills never do. Mrs. Morton has a powerful will, which will carry everything before it."

"Well, if that be so, how can you hope to win?"

"Mother, it shall be a war of wills, and I will conquer."

"But, Jannie, every advantage is on her side. I am sure you will find it impossible."

"Nothing is impossible—nothing shall be impossible to me! I will conquer that woman, or kill her."

Mrs. Erie paled afrightedly. "Jane! Jane! She expostulated. You are no better than a murderess!" Then, covering her face, she burst into tears.

"Tears—tears! The weakest of all impotence! Mother, before I would shed a tear of weakness, I would strike myself dead at your feet—dead? No, I would not be dead, but alive—doubly alive. Still, these eyes of mine shall never shed a tear of weakness. But I am not ready to throw my body away yet. It shall serve me as long as I choose to make use of it. No: I have considerable affection for it. Mother, is it beautiful?"

The mother raised her tear-stained face and looked at her child lovingly—longingly. "To my eyes," she an-

swered, "you are the most beautiful girl that ever lived. You are not like Isabel, to be sure. Your type of beauty is entirely different from hers. You are tall, slight, graceful, and carry yourself like a queen; your hair and eyes are black as night; your complexion white and clear—perhaps a little pale, but if you were rich and happy, you would have more color. But, daughter, there is something peculiar and strange about your eyes."

"Yes; my eyes are the windows of my soul. I look out through my eyes, mother. My soul flashes and burns within me like forked lightning, and my will responds like the powerful crash of the thunder's roar. Nothing can or shall withstand me."

And Jane arose to her feet looking like a panther at bay, ready to spring upon her victims at a moment when they thought her crouching in fear.

CHAPTER X.

A PARTNERSHIP IS CEMENTED.

Mark Chester sprang from his bed. It was eight o'clock. The breakfast gong was sounding loudly through the hotel. For a moment the young man did not know whether he was at Hong Kong or Calcutta, for he had slept the sleep of youth and robust health.

After a cold bath he dressed himself carefully and descended to the breakfast room. His eyes were bright, his face somewhat bronzed by travel.

The waiter, who gave him a seat, eyed him with astonishment, but said nothing. Every eye at the table rested upon him surprisedly.

"What is the matter with everybody?" thought Mark. "But perhaps the matter is with me. Ah, I remember! The matter must be that other young man who looks like me, or, it may be that I look like him. Well, I am sure it is not my fault—hope he will not take it amiss. Some more mush, if you please, waiter. I am blessed with an excellent appetite."

"Yes, sir! All right, sir!" and the waiter hastened to fill the order.

Mark finished his breakfast, planked his dollar and a half upon the counter in the clerk's office and leisurely descended the steps of the hotel, not pausing on the veranda to smoke a cigar or cigarette, for he did not smoke and had not a cent to buy a cigar with even if he had been addicted to the vile habit.

He looked about him.

"This world is very beautiful," he murmured; "but, just now, I am a stranger in a strange land. I really do not know what course to take. I don't care to tramp to Los Angeles, so I will make up my mind to remain here for awhile. I think I will go down and pay my respects to Mr. Kester—say good morning and thank him, at least. Good old man! How kind he was to me an utter stranger. He has a noble heart beneath a rough ex-

terior. Untutored, he may be, but a real gentleman, nevertheless."

He walked on briskly in the crisp, morning air. The beach was not now deserted as it had been the previous night. Many people were already out; some walking, some fishing from the wharf; while the fishermen were getting their boats ready for the day's work.

The slight figure of a girl brushed past the young man —a girl with great, flashing, scornful eyes, haughty head, and the step of a queen. Her eyes rested upon his for a moment with a startled glance, changing suddenly to a look of blank dismay.

Mark lifted his hat politely. The girl paused, extended her hand, saying:

"Good morning, Mr. Chesterfield. I wish you a happy New Year."

"I wish you many; however, my name is not Chesterfield but Chester—Mark Chester, at your service."

"Miss Erie—Miss Jane Erie," said that young lady. "I beg your pardon, sir. I mistook you for a young gentleman with whom I am acquainted; still, now that I observe you more closely, there is a slight difference in your appearance more than in your features or form. The young gentleman of whom I speak is staying at the hotel yonder; and, as you were coming directly from there, my mistake was but natural."

"The mistake has certainly been a pleasant one to me. I hope we may meet again."

Miss Erie smiled dazzlingly. Mark bowed and passed on.

"Ah! There are Molly and Kester." He hurried forward.

Mr. Kester looked up from his coffee as Mark approached.

"Hullo, young man, an' happy New Year! Wall, yer found it all right up thar at thet hotel, didn't yer?"

"All right, Mr. Kester. Many thanks to you. Having your breakfast all by yourself, I see. Are you going out today?" pointing toward the bright waters.

"No. Think Molly an' me 'll take a rest this New Year day an' enj'y ourselves. As yer kin see, I hev got on my bettermost rig, in honor o' ther day."

Mark looked about him. "Where are your fish, Mr. Kester?"

"Sold um all out. Yer yer hear thet?" and he chinked the golden coins in his pocket.

"Twenty good dollars! Best day's work I hev dun fur mor'n a year. Think I kin afford ter lay by fur a day. Yer look purty cheery this mornin', young man, an' as neat as a pin. Hev yer cum ter any conclusion as ter what yer air a goin' ter dew?"

"Not yet, Mr. Kester. I thought I should like to talk with you a little first. I know nothing of the country, as yet. Can work be had in plenty about here?"

"Der yer see thet thar collect o' shanties over thar?"

"Yes, to be sure. Do those huts and tents belong to the fishermen?"

"Nary a one. Thar's twenty-five or thirty good, able bodied men thar, as can't git a stich o' work hereabouts; an' some o' them an' the'r fam'lies air about starved."

Mark's countenance fell.

"An' 'taint no better'n Los Angeles, ne'ther. Ef yer go thar, young man, an' yer hev no friends nor money, an' yer ware ter happen ter ask a man ter loan yer—or gin yer a little—ter keep yer frum starvin', they'd put yer in the chain gang sure, an' yer'd heve ter carry thet thar heavy ball through thick an' thin, chained ter yer ankle. They'd make yer work then fur sartin. It's not quite so bad here, yer see; an', as yer look so respectable like, they 'll never think yer haint got a cent, nor home, nor nothin'."

"Do the people here consider it criminal not to have a home, or money?"

"Don't know 'bout thet, but as long as they treat yer like a criminal, it don't inspire a man ter be 'onest, does it?"

"Well, no. I should say not. But, Mr. Kester, I will not beg though I starve."

"Thet's ther right sperrit, young man."

"In all seriousness, Mr. Kester, do you think there is any chance for me about here?"

"No, I don't think ther is."

"Nor in the city of Los Angeles?"

"No, I don't think ther is. Ef yer hed plenty o'

money, some o' them shysters up thar would be sure ter git it away frum yer. Most o' them thar folks up thar live by the'r wits; an' it's as hard to find an 'onest man as ter find needles in a hay-mow or a fish as hes swallerd a dimon'."

"Well, how about the mines?"

"The best o' them is all gobbled up by rich sindicates, or millionaires. Ef yer jest want ter go an' dig in them thar mines fur little or nothin', an' find yerself—thet is ter say—find yer own grub stake—why, they'll let yer, I gess; but yer'll have ter hev a good bit o' money ter git thar, an' buy yer grub too."

Mark looked downcast.

"No man oughten ter cum ter Californy unless he's got plenty o' chink, an' plenty o' cheek as well."

"Do you earn much at fishing, Mr. Kester?"

"Wall, sometimes a good bit; an' then agin, luck 's aginst me. Howsumever, I parservere, an' I hev laid by quite a goodly sum, takin' it year in an' year out. But sum o' them fishermen here don't arn the'r salt. They say, 'ole Kister's lucky,' but I tell yer, yung man, luck don't hev much ter do with it. I usually takes Molly, airly in ther mornin', an' we start out 'fore sunrise, an' we don't cary eny black bottle with us. Molly says ter me, 'Nathaniel, let liker alone. We don't need it, Nathan.' An' I think Molly's right. Don't tetch it. An' then ef I don't ketch fish in ther mornin', I stay out 'till I does ketch um; an' sumtimes it's midnight afore Molly an' I gits in. Then I hes um ter clean, ready fur ther cart in ther mornin', which is very airly in comin'. But, then, I hes my pleasures an' my pains, yung man, an' so does most other people."

"Would you like to take me as partner? I will go with you early and late. I will help you in every way that I can."

"Wall, now, yung man; perhaps yer couldn't do eny better. I hev thought es how I shud like a pardner, ef he wus of ther right sort. Most o' them fellers as wants ter go out with me must take ther black bottle with um, an' they's good fur nuthin' shortly after they hes emptied it. They jist lay down in ther bottom o' ther boat, while ole Kister does ther work. An' then, when they gits

ashore, they wants half ther chink fur bein' pardner. I gits tired o' thet purty soon. They never takes Molly inter consideration; an' she cost me a good bit o' money."

"Well, now, Mr. Kester, I will go with you, if you will take me. It shall be man for man between us; and you may give me one-third of the profits, if you please. That will leave one-third for Molly, and one-third for yourself."

"How about them thar cloes? Yer carnt war them, no how."

"Have not you a few old duds you can loan me for a week or so?"

"Wall, yis, I hev; an' now I think on't, yer a lad after my own heart. I jist needs yer, an' thet's a fact. Purty hard fur me ter git Molly ashore, all by myself. She kicks like a young colt, yer see; but when one takes her by the head, an' another pushes her astern, then she's milder an' not so full o' her cranks. Give us yer fist on 't, yung feller! Mark's yer name, ain't it? An' we'll ratify this ere bargin right here an' now."

Mark gave his hand to the old man with a beaming face, and the partnership was cemented.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WITCH WHO SHOULD BE BURNED.

It was very late, on New Year's day, when Mrs. Morton arose from troubled sleep. Oh, what had occurred to her during the night? Had she really seen an apparition, or had she but fallen asleep in her chair and dreamed the strangest of dreams? It really must have been a horrible nightmare! Strange, how much the aerial being resembled Jane Erie, her seamstress's daughter. Oh, yes; of course, it was nothing but a dream; still, how strange, how real! Jane Erie, a rival to Isabel? How preposterous the thought! But dreams always went by contraries. Why, Mrs. Erie was in the depths of poverty, and Jane had scarcely a second dress to her back. Mother and daughter both, looked half starved. The idea of that uncouth, poverty stricken girl raising her eyes to a millionaire! "How could my mind take on such grotesque thoughts, even in sleep? No: Mr. Chesterfield said he would like to have a private interview with me, today; so I invited him to dine with us and spend the evening here. I know, very well, that he intends to ask me for the hand of Isabel, and, probably, he will propose to her during the evening.

"Jane Erie, indeed! Why, I would kill the jade first! But I need not trouble myself: it is altogether too ridiculous to think about.

"Ah, Isabel! Is that you, daughter?"

"Yes. Am I late, mama, dear? Ten o'clock, already? Is it possible?"

"Never mind, Isabel. Ring the bell. We will take breakfast here in my room."

Isabel did as her mother desired. The air was chill, so a little breakfast table was drawn up before the glowing grate, and mother and daughter were soon seated, in comfortable morning gowns, sipping coffee and eating toast and eggs.

"I have invited Mr. Chesterfield to dine with us, Isa-

bel. He also requested a private interview with me, and there can be but one meaning to that. He will ask me for the hand of my only daughter—my Isabel—and I shall give my unqualified consent to your union with him. Isabel, this is a proud and happy day for me. He will certainly propose to you this evening. I want to know beforehand, whether you intend to accept him, or not."

Isabel sat. pale and trembling. Her mother's will had always been law to her. How could she now resist for the first time in her life? At last she raised her sweet blue eyes, filled with tears, to her mother's face.

"Mama," she said, "I do not love Mr. Chesterfield. If I were to marry him, I should certainly be most unhappy. I cannot marry without love. I wish to obey you in all things; but, mama, I love no one as yet. Let me enjoy my happy girlhood a few years longer. So few people are happy after marriage, I dread to think about it. Let me be happy a little longer, mama, dear, and then if I must marry, I will try to love some one if I can."

"And let the chance of a lifetime slip through your fingers, thereby. Do you know, Isabel, that not one girl in ten thousand, of your station in life, would have the opportunity of marrying a millionaire?"

"Then I am one of ten thousand who is most unhappy. Ten thousand other girls may marry for love, while I am expected to marry for money. Mama, when I marry, I wish to wed a man, not money."

"But in this case, Isabel, you wed not only a man but his money. Marcus Chesterfield is without reproach, fine looking, and what more can one have? Now, Isabel, I lay my command upon you—that you do not refuse him tonight. I can enforce my command, if necessary. You have been so pliant, heretofore, that you and I have sustained very happy relations toward each other; but, Isabel, I may prove harder than adamant, if you rebel against my authority."

Tears were now rolling down Isabel's fair cheeks.

"Obey me, my daughter, and we shall both be rich and exceedingly happy."

"Jane Erie is here, madam, and would like to speak

with you," announced Mrs. Morton's maid, putting her head in at the door.

"What does she want?"

"She has brought home the sewing madam gave her to do."

"Well, you can show her in here: I do not care to go down just at present."

Jane Erie entered the room.

"Your work is finished, Mrs. Morton," said Jane, placing the bundle upon a table, not far away, at the same time casting a burning, flashing glance upon that lady's face.

"Well, Jane, you and your mother have been long enough about it, I hope. Bring it here to me. I wish to see if it be well done. Isabel, you had better go to your own room. You are looking quite ill. Late hours do not agree with you, I think. No doubt you danced more than you ought to have done."

Isabel obeyed, but not before the quick eyes of Jane had noted the tear-stained face and drooping figure of that young lady.

Jane Erie gave her a scornful look as she departed, then taking up the bundle, she laid it in the lap of the woman she meant to conquer.

"Why could you not have finished this work sooner?" she asked, a hard look overspreading her face.

"Because, madam, we did it as soon as we could."

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Morton. You are an idle girl, walking the beach a good part of the day, so I hear, when you should be at home helping your mother. You have kept the work over the time specified, so I shall not pay you full price for it. It has put me to great inconvenience."

The girl raised herself haughtily to her full height, flashing defiance from her great black eyes, and if the glance could have laid Mrs. Morton dead at her feet, she would have been well pleased.

"Madam," she said, in low, concentrated tones, her eyes resting in full upon those of the lady's, burning into her very soul, "you will pay us the price agreed upon."

Mrs. Morton quailed visibly. Her soul actually

shrank and shivered within itself. The power of that glance shook her like a leaf shaken in the wind. She could not move hand or foot. The strange girl's eyes were riveted upon hers, and held them as a powerful magnet holds steel. She stretched forth her hand.

"Give me the money! Give it to me, or I will hurl your soul into an abyss of vipers, where it rightly belongs! Give it to me, I say!"

Mrs. Morton grew faint and dizzy. It seemed, for a moment, as though the room were filled with hideous, grinning demons, ready to slay her at the bidding of those great, flashing orbs of darkness. She found herself without the power of will, or, at least, her will was so completely overshadowed by a more powerful one, that, instinctively, her hand went to her pocket and drew forth her purse. The girl allowed her own will to subside, while a look of expectation crossed her features. That one instant was fatal to her purpose. The lady roused herself somewhat.

"I will not pay for the work until I have examined it," she said, which she at once proceeded to do.

Jane Erie said nothing, as such examination was customary.

"This work is not done to my taste," she said, tartly. "Here, take it back to your mother, and tell her to see that it is done properly."

"The work is done as well as human hands can do it," replied Jane. "You are a falsifier! Pay me the price of the work! Pay me instantly, or I will set the demons of the air upon you—you vile intriguer!"

And again those eyes were fixed immovably upon those of the lady's—again that dreadful, dreadful, dizzy, sickening sensation—and Mrs. Morton could have sworn that another being stood by Jane's side, much larger and more powerful than Jane—a woman wearing a crown of gold and sparkling jewels—a woman bedecked with jewels and precious stones, who waved her hands toward her attendant imps, and Mrs. Morton thought they were about to spring upon her and rend her in pieces.

This time Jane Erie's glance never wavered.

"Pay me immediately!"

And the money was laid in her outstretched palm by the trembling, frightened woman.

"Begone! Begone this moment!" commanded Mrs. Morton in loud tones, "and never let me see your face again."

"I will go when it pleases me," said Jane, "and you shall see my face many, many times again."

"I will not see your face! I will not look upon you! No servant of mine shall ever allow you to pass these doors again."

"I will pass them, though they were guarded by an armed regiment! You shall see me at the very time when you think yourself most secure from my glance."

Jane coolly put the money in her purse.

"This will keep my mother and myself, a few days, at least; and much may take place during that time. Good morning, madam. It pleases me to go now, but be careful what you do. Your thoughts are not unknown to me. Thoughts are things, madam, and are visible to those who would see them—to those who know how to use the inner sight."

And Jane Erie passed from the room with a springing step and haughty bearing. Mrs. Morton drew a sigh of relief.

"That girl is a veritable witch! I always have believed in witchcraft. How anyone can read, and believe the Bible, without believing in witchcraft, passes my comprehension. That girl is a witch! She has sold her soul to Satan! She really ought to be burned, and I should like to assist at the burning. I can readily understand, now, why they burned the witches at old Salem. She threatened me, too; and talked just as all witches do. I wish she were riding a broomstick across the Pacific, never to return. India is the place for such a creature as that or the interior of Africa. She ought to be chained and sent to Siberia or the North Pole. I ought to have called the servants and had her ejected from the house. Why did I foolishly pay her? Why did I not compel her to do the work over again? No one will ever get the better of me again, if I can help it. I am glad that Isabel was not here, in the room, to notice my weakness; and she need know nothing of

this. Well, I must go down, now, and give directions about the dinner; and no expense must be spared in getting it up. I would like Mr. Chesterfield to know that his future mother-in-law understands how to manage an establishment, and could easily manage that of a millionaire. Isabel must wear her most becoming dress, and I shall wear my garnet satin, and my diamonds. I should not wish Mr. Chesterfield to think that Isabel and myself would not grace his home."

Whereupon Mrs. Morton descended the stairs to carry out her intentions.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BETROTHAL.

"What horrible noise is that?" and Mr. Marcus Chesterfield started up in his bed.

"Is there an earthquake, or a terrible thunder storm? Is Southern California sinking beneath the waves of the Pacific? as that fool in New York prophesied, or, what in the name of all reverberating sounds can it be?"

Mr. Chesterfield rubbed his eyes, made a violent effort to collect his senses, scattered by the amount of champagne he had drunk some hours previous.

"By my soul! I believe it is nothing more than the gong sounding for breakfast."

He glanced at the small clock on the mantle. "One o'clock, as I live! No, it's not breakfast; it must be lunch." He rang the bell. His valet appeared.

"Have my breakfast served here in my rooms, at once."

"Yes, sir."

"And when you have given the order, dress me as quickly as possible."

He approached the mirror and earnestly scrutinized his reflection—deathly pale, bloodshot eyes with livid, puffy circles beneath, dank hair, haggard expression, trembling hands, together with a feeling of peevish discontent and unhappy restlessness. He was soon dressed and his breakfast stood before him.

"Mix a glass of brandy and soda for me. My head feels as if it were filled with wheels, all moving in opposite directions, tearing my brain asunder," and he leaned his aching head on his hand.

"Wish I might get along without champagne. Don't believe it's good for my head or my nerves. Dancing in an over-heated ball-room half the night does not have a refreshing effect on one the next morning; besides, ghosts are not exactly to my taste."

"Ghosts!" exclaimed the valet aghast, raising his hands as if to ward off some dreadful thing. "Ghosts, did you say, sir?"

"That's the word I used, Lewis, ghosts; or, at the very least, ghost. I do not remember of seeing but one."

"But, sir—really, sir—you must have fallen asleep."

"Asleep or awake, I was drinking champagne when I first saw the ghost, and drank two glasses afterward. A man does not drink champagne while asleep, does he?"

"No—that is, not usually, sir; but, possibly, you dreamed you were drinking it; but you must have drank it all beforehand, sir."

"Have it as you will, Lewis; before, or after, is of little consequence; but I know I was broad awake and drinking champagne, when the thing made its appearance."

"Oh, sir! Oh! And what did it look like, if it please you, sir?"

"Well, now, that is the strangest part of all. It looked precisely, in form and feature, like that girl who came here the other day with my shirts. You remember, I ordered some shirts made. Mrs. Erie, the girl's mother, was to make them. If that girl, Jane, they call her, was not living, I should certainly think what I saw was her ghost. She cannot be dead, Lewis, else we should have known of it in this small sequestered town."

"No, sir; she is not dead, for I saw her but a half hour since, and she was walking briskly enough." Then the valet laughed. "That goes to prove what I said, sir; you were dreaming," and Lewis felt greatly relieved at the thought; for ghosts were not to his taste, more than to the taste of his master.

"Lewis, did you never hear of the doppelt ganger?"

"Well, now I bethinks me—yes, sir, I have, sir; but I never believed in it, sir—never; but ghosts, ghosts, are very different, very different, sir. The shades of the dead are sometimes troubled, and they walk, restless like, sir, and a walking ghost ought to be laid, sir."

"Laid? I should consider it a difficult task to lay out a ghost. One, certainly, would have to catch it first. As Socrates of old once said: 'You may bury me, after I have left my body, if you can catch me.' Ghosts are very illusive, Lewis. But to return to my doppelt ganger. I believe it is now called the astral body. Yes, I certainly saw the astral form of that haughty, black-eyed Jane Erie."

"And what should the astral form want of you, sir? She is a grade lower than those who serve you here, sir; beneath even me, sir."

"Well, I don't suppose the astral form stops to consider caste, Lewis; but why she should care to visit me, that is the question which puzzles me."

"May be, sir, as how she has fallen in love with you, sir."

"That is not at all likely, Lewis, but if, possibly, it might be so, it would be a strange sort of love; she is not one to indulge in sickly sentimentality, I should say. Her great, flashing, weird eyes look strangely at me, and she carries herself as haughtily as a duchess. Those weird eyes are strangely fascinating, however. Lewis, do you think that women have the power of hypnotism—mesmerism, you know? Do you think that a woman could mesmerize one?"

"I never heard about women having the power, sir; but they do say there are plenty of men who can hypnotize people. Don't know why women should not be able to do the same—but that has nothing to do with the doppelt ganger."

"I think it has much to do with it, Lewis. The astral form—or doppelt ganger—is the real person, as I understand it; consequently, would have the power to hypnotize one—and I believe I was hypnotized last night, by the astral form of that black eyed beauty, Jane Erie."

Lewis laughed, and, with a significant look, said:

"Then if she hypnotizes you, sir, the blame—if blame comes—must rest with her."

"Just so, Lewis. I shall get better acquainted with that sprite, be sure. Now, Lewis, dress me in my very best, for I dine with the Mortons today."

At this time of year, there were but few guests at the Morton House. Tourists and travelers preferred the city of Los Angeles to the seaside. It was during the summer months that the Morton Hotel was full. There were but one or two old people, who kept close to their rooms, so there would be no one at dinner, but a very deaf old gentleman, besides Mrs. Morton and Isabel and Marcus Chesterfield.

Mr. Chesterfield arrived at the appointed hour. Mrs.

Morton welcomed him with great effusiveness. Isabel was cold, but dainty and sweet as a blush rose.

Mrs. Morton took Mr. Chesterfield's arm when dinner was announced, and Isabel smiled sweetly into the deaf old gentleman's face, as she supported his trembling steps down the stairs, all the time making it appear that she was clinging to his arm for support. This pleased him greatly, for many a year had passed since beautiful ladies sought the support of his arm.

The conversation at the table was unimportant, not worth recording; but that private interview which was to be granted shortly after dinner was all important in the eyes of Mrs. Morton. On that interview hung her destiny, so she thought.

Time dragged heavily, but at last, at last, she found herself alone with Mr. Chesterfield in her small, private parlor, leading from the main drawing-room. Soon after a few preliminary remarks, not at all important to the thread of our story, or at all interesting to Mrs. Morton, Mr. Chesterfield said:

"Madam, I suppose you discern the object of this interview?"

"Possibly so," answered Mrs. Morton; a look of triumph flashing into her face.

"I thought it well, madam, to gain your consent before asking your sweet daughter, Isabel, to give me her hand in marriage."

"Mr. Chesterfield, you have my full and free consent to propose to my daughter. I consider that you honor us greatly by your preference."

So that settled the matter, as far as Mrs. Morton was concerned; but how would it be with Isabel? Her manner was certainly cold. It might, possibly, be caused by shyness and modesty. Well, he could but make the plunge.

The old gentleman retired early, and while Isabel was playing some favorite airs on the piano, Mrs. Morton slipped, unobserved, from the room.

"It must be now or never," thought Marcus Chesterfield; and, when Isabel ceased playing, and turned on the piano stool, Mr. Chesterfield, seating himself as closely as possible to Isabel, said, his voice trembling slightly:

"Miss Morton, I find that I love and admire you above all other young ladies; and I desire to make you my wife. Your mother has already given her consent to our union. It now remains for your sweet lips to say the one little word which will make me happy. Dearest Isabel, will you be my wife?"

The girl's eyes did not droop beneath his gaze. Her color remained the same as before. She was as sweet and cool as a spring violet.

"Mr. Chesterfield," she said, "you did not ask me if I loved you; and I think that question more important than any other."

"Did I not? How inadvertent." He took her hand. "Sweet Isabel—do you love me?"

"Mr. Chesterfield, I do not—that is to say—I do not love you more than I love a great many other people; and I thought it necessary to love the man I would marry above all other beings in the world."

"I think," remarked Mr. Chesterfield, "that such ideas are very romantic—more romantic, perhaps, than true. If you love no one else, and think me a desirable young man, I see no reason why we should not marry. You are very young yet, Isabel. Your regard for me may become greater as you grow older. You are aware, I think, that I can give you great wealth."

"But, do you think, Mr. Chesterfield, that wealth will give us the happiness we desire?"

"I do not see how there can be any happiness without wealth."

"If I thought I could love you, as I think one ought to love the man one marries, I might look favorably upon your proposal; at least, I would try to for my mother's sake. She greatly desires that we shall wed. Perhaps, Mr. Chesterfield, in a year from this time, I shall know my own mind better. I am willing to promise you, that, if at the end of a year, I find I love you more than all others, I will become your wife. More than this I cannot do."

Entreaty nor persuasion could not move her from this decision. Marcus was obliged to yield, much against his will. He arose; his manner was cool and collected. "I hold you engaged, then, for one year?"

"Yes, if it so please you."

"Accept, then, this ring of betrothal—a diamond of rare value," and he placed it upon her finger. "This is New Year's day. Upon New Year's day, one year hence—the New Year's day of nineteen hundred—our marriage shall take place, unless, before that time, you return the ring to me, with the words—that you love another better than you do me."

Isabel bowed assent, and Mr. Chesterfield took his departure.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PROSPECTIVE MILLIONAIRE.

"Pretty cool time of it," said he to himself. "Stupid! I never felt more stupid in my life. Dull and stupid beyond anything! Stupid old man. Stupid old mother. No doubt she thinks herself young, however; and, Isabel—as uninteresting a young lady as I ever met. Can't say, for the life of me, why I asked her to be my wife. Don't know that I want her; yet she is as pretty as a pink and as cool as a cucumber. I wanted to see if I could inspire her with the least amount of warmth for me. Mrs. Morton? Bah! She simply wants me to marry the girl because I am rich. If I were in poverty, she, probably, would not allow me to pass inside her door. I, really, do not care whether the girl marries me or not. Believe I have been drawn into this by an unseen power; the power of that woman's wish, or will. I knew she wanted me to marry the girl, and her will seemed to force me on, as my own will was weak in the matter; for I hardly cared which way—to use a vulgar phrase—the cat jumped.

"Well, I have tied myself up for a year, at least. But I am young yet. Don't know that I care to marry for the next five years."

* * * * *

Mrs. Morton bounced in upon Isabel as soon as she heard the young man depart.

"Oh, Isabel! Darling Isa! When is the happy day to be?"

"A year from today, mama, if we both retain the same mind."

"A year from today? Are you crazy, Isabel? A year from today? A whole year—an eternity! Why, he might fall in love with twenty girls before that time!"

"Just so, mama. And would it not be better for him to fall in love before marriage than after? If he can fall in love with any girl during the coming year, he certainly does not love me. Mother, I hope, when I do

marry, my husband's love will last more than a year; and. if he could, by any possible means, fall in love with twenty, during the whole course of his life, I, certainly, do not care to be his wife."

"Oh, Isabel; marriage would keep him from falling in love with any other than his wife."

"Would it, mama? Then there must be many who are mistaken in their opinions."

"And you have just as good as refused the best offer you will ever have?"

"Perhaps so, mama, if you look at it from a purely business standpoint. Mother, if I must sell myself, give me a year of grace, I beg. Let me have one more happy year, before I sink into hopeless misery."

"Did ever any girl talk like this before, while refusing a millionaire?"

"Mama, I believe I could be far happier on a mill, than a million, providing love went with the mill, and indifference with the million."

Mrs. Morton threw herself into a chair and burst into tears of chagrin and disappointment. "Oh, sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

"Mother, I am not thankless; believe me, no! I would give my life for you, dear mama. I only ask for this one year of grace; then, if you desire, I will marry Marcus Chesterfield next New Year's day," and Isabel, kissing her mother softly, went to her own room.

* * * * *

It had been arranged between the old fisherman and Mark Chester, that the latter should keep his small, comfortable, but cheap room at the hotel.

"Fur yer know," said Nathaniel, "thet Molly ain't got room enough fur both on us; an' as long as yer thar, yer might as well git yer breakfast thar, too. It 'll be jest as cheap, I reckon. But as we kin never know jest when we 'll git in, we mote as well hev our dinner together on the beach."

"That will suit me much better than sleeping in the boat," said Mark, "for when I am not fishing, I should like to keep myself as neat as possible—moreover, my better clothes would soon be spoiled in the boat."

"Thet's true, young chap, as I guess yer 'll hev an eye to sum purty yung gal, sometime."

"Yes," replied Mark, "I hope to be the happy husband of a lovely and loving wife, by the time I am twenty-five. I think, uncle—may I call you uncle?—that a man ought to marry by that time, if he ever intends to."

"Wall, yis, he ought, pervidin' she don't die. Yis, yer may call me uncle, or, if yer think it better still, I'll adopt yer—yer shall be my son."

"Well, as you were never married, unpleasant complications might arise. No; I think it must be uncle."

"Wall, whether I'm yer dad or yer uncle won't make much difference, fur ef yer a good boy, an' a true, as I think yer air, I will give yer all I hev. When I go ter live with Molly I sha'n't need nothin' on this 'ere airth, I am confident; an' now we air talkin' on it, thar's a very pretty gal as lives up in thet thar cottage, yender. Dew yer see thet thar little black cottage on the rise, jest off the beach?"

"Yes," answered Mark.

"Wall, thar's a woman an' her darter as lives thar. The gal's a purty gal enough, but she's queer. The mother, she's good as gold; an' ef it wa'n't fur Molly, an' thet thar woman 'd hev me, don't know, young feller, but what I'd git spliced now."

"I met a young girl on the path, this morning, apparently coming from that house. Is the young lady you speak of tall, with dark, flashing eyes, curling lip, and haughty brow?"

"Thet's her—thet's her as true as yer live. She's as proud as a queen. This airth ain't good enough fur thet thar young woman, leastwise, I guess she thinks it ain't; but they air, the most o' the time, on the p'int o' starvation, them two air; but the old un is as meek as a lamb. I was up thar, this mornin', an' left um a fish; fur they don't git much sewin' ter dew, this time o' ther year; an' thet thar old lady thanked me with the tears a runnin' down her cheeks."

"The young lady spoke to me," said Mark, "mistaking me for another young man who is also staying at the hotel."

The old fisherman run his fingers through his hair and stared at Mark with a puzzled expression of countenance.

"She mistook yer fur thet young million'er, didn't she, now? Wall, yer as much alike as two peas in a pod, thet is ter say, jest at ther fust glance. Yer might hev ben run in ther same mold, but one o' yer's gold, an' ther tother's dross, or my name ain't Kister. He's dross covered with gold, an' yer gold covered with dross; thet's ther difference atween yer—so old Kister thinks."

"I caught sight of this young man, myself, as I entered the hotel last night. He was handing a very beautiful young lady into a superb carriage."

"Wall, I guess that thar gal was Miss Isabel Morton."

"I think. uncle, she was the most beautiful young lady I ever saw in my life. She seemed to me as fresh as a rose and as modest and sweet as a violet. Uncle, if I ever marry, I hope my wife will look like Miss Morton. My impressions of the other young lady are not favorable. You called the young gentleman a millionaire. Uncle, I am determined to be worth a million, at least, before I am twenty-five years old."

Mr. Nathaniel Kester raised himself to his feet, thrust both hands into his pockets, spread his legs apart and looked at Mark with protruding eyes and puffed out cheeks.

"A million'er? Whew! An' dew yer expect ter make a million dollars catching yaller-tails, rock cod, smelt, herrin', an' halibut, with now an' then a salmon thrown in? Not much, young man—not much! Ef yer make a decent livin' at it, it is ther most thet eny on us expect. Thar's not a fisherman on this 'ere coast thet kin beet old Kister, an' I hev ben fishin' here fur ther last five year, an' I guess a thousand dollars is about all I hev made. Yer crazy, young man—yer clean gone crazy!"

"No; I am in my right mind; but I will be worth one million dollars in five years from this time, or I will go where money is not needed."

"Dew yer intend ter turn trainrobber, or highwayman, or sum sich?" asked Nathaniel. "Ef yer dew, yer

might as well leave me an' Molly right now, jist as quick as yer kin, fur Molly, nor me, never wronged no man outen a cent. Molly wouldn't allow it—she wouldn't."

"No, uncle. I will never wrong anyone out of a cent. I will get my money honestly or not at all. I do not expect to get rich catching fish, but it will give me a start in the right direction. How does it happen that the young man of whom you speak, is worth a million?"

"Oh, his father left it to him. Ther young feller, hisself, never airned a penny in his life; but, atween you an' me, I think he'll manige ter git red on it all, in short order."

"Uncle Kester, do you think he will enjoy as much the spending of his million, that he has not earned, as I shall in earning a million?"

"Wall, now, thet's a question as I never thought on afore. 'Pears like a man must enjoy spendin' money more than airnin' of it."

"Then you think a man enjoys idleness and vice better than he does industry and virtue?"

"Can't say thet I dew, a lookin' on it in thet light."

"Do not you believe, uncle, that poor men are happier than rich ones?"

"Don't know 'bout thet; but, ef yer think so, why in tarnation dew yer want ter git rich?"

"Well," answered Mark, musingly, "I have heard it said, that whatever one wills to do, one can do, providing the will is powerful—exceedingly powerful and tenacious—never relaxing its hold or purpose. When I found myself on this lone beach, friendless, and without a penny, I swore, to myself, that I would be rich—that I would make friends of all mankind—that I never would commit a dishonorable act, or an act of any kind that could grieve my angel mother, or bring the blush of shame to the cheek of some sweet and beautiful girl whom I should one day meet and marry; at the same time, I made up my mind that I would commence by performing, faithfully and well, the first labor that came to my hand, no matter how low or mean it might be considered, providing it was honorable and the money received for it had been really earned."

"Wall, now, boy, yer can't airn no million dollars at eny kind o' labor, no matter what."

"I know that as well as you do, uncle; but I shall be able to make money in some other way, yet labor must be the starting point."

"But yer sed as how yer wuldn't take nuthin' as yer didn't airn."

"Neither will I, for whatever I take, I will earn in some way."

"Wall; yer a lad arter my own heart, an' Molly's with yer, boy, be sure o' thet. Now, it 'pears like ter me, thet Molly an' thet good mother o' yourn air friends over thar on t'other side, yer know."

"Uncle Nathan, I believe they are; and I do not think they are very far away from us, either. I believe they are near us, and know all about us, and will help us, in every possible way, if we live right and do right. I never mean to do anything, in the whole course of my life, that could grieve my angel mother in the slightest."

"But I hev hearn tell, thet ther love o' money was ther root of all evil. Would it please her, dew yer think, fur you ter set yer mind on a makin' a million?"

"Yes: if when I have made it, I use it for the benefit of the poor and needy, or for the enlightenment of mankind in general, or for any purpose for the good of the world. After I have earned my million, I will spend it in doing good, or I will turn it over in such a way that it shall do the most good to the largest number."

This conversation took place just as the sun was dropping below the horizon, on New Year's day, while Uncle Kester and Mark were eating their dinner on the beach, by the side of Molly. They had spent the day in making a few repairs and cleaning up the boat; for, early on the following morning, they intended to row out to the most available spot and haul in as many fish as possible.

"Look at thet thar sun," said Uncle Nathan. "Look's like as though he intended to drown hisself in the Pacific, or else set ther big ocean on fire! But thet thar sea just cools his arder," and Uncle Kester shivered, for as the sun dipped into the sea, the air became cold and penetrating.

"Thar he goes, out o' sight; an' it 'll be dark in five minits. We don't hev much glomin' in these ere parts. Now, boy, we shell want ter start very airly in ther mornin', long 'fore ther sun gits up over them thar mountins; but fust, I'll smoke awhile. Perhaps yer'd better go up to ther hotel an' go ter bed airly, an' when my pip's out I'll go ter rest with Molly—perhaps ter dream o' my angel Molly. I am thinkin' o' jinin' my Molly in t'other world, while you air thinkin' o' ther one yer will hev, by an' by, in this world."

Mark arose, and giving his hand to his new found friend, said:

"Good night, uncle; happy dreams. I will join you early in the morning."

"Good night, pardner—good night, my boy—hope yer 'll dream o' ther purty lady yer 'll marry, some day."

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

The full moon was now rising over the distant mountain tops, making a glittering, silvery pathway across the Pacific, as far as the eye could see, giving to the roads and pathways of the little town a silvery sheen, gilding the spires of the churches, making all things weird and beautiful in its light.

Mark walked up the pathway toward the hotel which was now to be his home for a time at least. Arriving there, the beauty of the night enticed him onward, and as he did not care to retire so early, he thought he would take a turn through the little town.

He had not walked far, when, by the bright moonlight, he saw the same young man whom he had seen the night before handing the young lady into the carriage, descending the steps of a nice looking residence, which he was passing at the moment.

"The young man who looks like me," thought Mark. "Ah! he has been paying his respects to that lovely young lady, his fiance, no doubt. The most beautiful girl I ever saw."

And Mark heaved a sigh. He could not have told why. He glanced at the door as he passed on. It was of stained glass, the gaslight, within, giving to it brightness and beauty. Above the door he read: "Morton House," and at the next crossing he read, "Belleview Avenue."

That house, then, was where the charming young girl resided. She, no doubt, loved and would marry the man who was worth a million and looked like him.

He did not envy the aforesaid young man, but he meant, some day, to occupy a position as good. He wandered on, for an hour or more, and then returned. As he passed the Morton House, on his return, he happened to glance up at a window in the second story. It was open, but no light was within. The night was so still that he heard distinctly a heavy sigh, at the same time he caught sight of a form, at the window, with

head bowed on the folded arms. The moonlight shone full on the golden hair, the rounded arms, the beautiful neck, and the shining, white drapery; but the heavy, mornful sigh, the drooping attitude, pierced the young man to the heart.

"That is certainly Miss Isabel Morton," thought Mark. "I should know her among ten thousand. Can it be possible that she is unhappy? A happy young lady would never droop and sigh like that."

He passed on and soon ascended the steps of the grand hotel that was now his home.

Mark Chester went directly to his room. The room was small, simply, but neatly furnished, and contained that modern convenience, a gas-log. It was the first thing of the kind that Mark had ever seen.

The chamber maid had already told him how it was to be managed; and, as the night was cold, he turned on the gas and applied a match to it. The effect was charming to one who was not acquainted with this sort of thing; it really appeared quite magical.

Mark gazed at the fire with happy eyes and pleased countenance.

During the day Mark had brought up to the room the clothes he was to wear when engaged in that very seductive employment, fishing for "yaller-tails." After putting his clothes in order, he drew an easy chair and the table near to the grate; seating himself he gazed reflectively at the magical fire.

The paper, which had been wrapped around the clothes, still lay upon the table. It was strong, light brown wrapping paper. Mechanically he took up the paper and began to fold it into sheets about the size of common letter paper. He carefully smoothed out all the creases; then, taking a pen-knife from his pocket, he run the blade through the folds of the paper, and when he had done this, he found he had about a dozen sheets of very good paper.

Thus far his actions had been mechanical. He was naturally neat and methodical in all things. His brain was also exceedingly active, and he was alone. This paper tempted him to write. Why not write out his thoughts, his intentions, his resolutions? Pen and ink he

did not yet possess, but there was a good lead pencil in his vest pocket.

"Just the thing," he murmured. "Now, let me see—what shall I write about first? Shall I keep a diary? Yes; I will keep a diary. I will date my diary: Redondo Beach, New Year's Night, January 1, 1899,

"Diary."

"Mark Chester—orphan; born in London, 1879, on New Year's Eve. Having lost my parents, and being without any near relatives, I have come to this New World to seek my fortune, or, rather, to make my fortune; thinking that the prospects here for a penniless young man might be better than in England: moreover, it was the wish of my dying mother.

"I arrived here last night—New Year's Eve—how very strange! The evening of my birth."

He put his hand in his pocket and drew forth the mill.

"Ho! little talisman," he said. "You are all the money I have, at present. My mother, on her death bed, recalled this to my mind—the mill she put in my Christmas stocking some years before. You are my sole inheritance. On my arrival here, last night, I sat dismally on the beach, not knowing what to do. My darling mother's spirit overshadowed me. She softly whispered that she would inspire some one to aid me. An old fisherman, shortly thereafter, drew his boat up on to the sands. It was late and he asked me to help him. I did so. He proved to be a kind-hearted, good man. He paid me for my services and I was enabled, thereby, to secure a room and breakfast at a fine hotel—the hotel where I am now staying. It is called 'Redondo House.' The fisherman's name is Nathaniel Kester. He is a genuine Yankee, from New England, and I love him dearly. We have entered into partnership, and, for the present, I shall become a fisherman. The world may think this a very low calling for an educated and aspiring young man; but I will not ignore any calling, providing it is honorable. My object, now, in keeping this diary, is to draw up a code of resolutions, to aid and strengthen me in my future career, put them down in black and white—or, rather, this wrapping paper is brown—and

strictly adhere to them for the remainder of my life on earth.

"O, my sainted mother, I conjure thee now, to come near and help me; for I am assured that our departed loved ones are often near us, to watch over our welfare and help us.

* * * * *

"I have been sitting passively for a short time, thinking that my mother would thus be better able to influence me, and tell me something about the way in which I should conduct my future life. Ah! yes. She is with me now. She is bending over me. I feel her long hair, as it falls across my shoulders, and the gentle pressure of her hand upon my head; together, we will write out the code of resolutions:—

"I take oath, to thee, sweet spirit of my mother, that I will never use tobacco.

"I will never drink intoxicating liquors.

"I will never use profane language.

"I will never, knowingly, wrong man, woman, or child.

"I will do, with all my might, whatever my hands find to do.

"I will commence by doing that which lies nearest me to be done.

"And, whatever I do, no matter how humble it may be, I will do to the very best of my ability.

"I will deal honestly with all mankind.

"I will not gamble or bet. I will not drive fast horses.

"I will love and treat with politeness all human beings. I will never be cruel to animals. I will relieve all suffering, wherever I find it, as much as lies within my power.

"In one year from today I shall be legally entitled to vote.

"I will never, knowingly, cast a vote because someone, or some party, political, or otherwise, desires me to do so. I will vote for no law which I think wrong; neither for any candidate for office, that I believe to be immoral or impure. I will only cast my vote for those who, I think, are truly good, and have the welfare of humanity at heart. I will try, by all fair and honorable means, to become wealthy; not that I may selfishly enjoy wealth,

but that, with it, I may be better able to help my brother man.

"I will never marry without love; but, I hope to love and marry.

"My wife shall have equal privileges with myself, and shall stand to me as the better part of myself.

"I will envy no man, nor be covetous of anything which belongs to another; but I will strive to be myself and live my own life—that is, I will try to individualize myself, and walk in a path all my own.

"I will commit no act that my loving mother, and all other pure angels, might not approve; and I will pray in secret, that I may know what will be best for me to do at all times.

"Religion: It shall be my religion to search for, and discover truth, wherever she may be found, and accept the highest truth that I may be able to understand.

"I will fight against ignorance, which I believe to be all the hell and devil there is, and try to set free from error everyone with whom I come in contact, and help them to turn their faces toward the truth and right. I will try to gain, within my own soul, all the wisdom, truth, and love, which is possible for it to hold; and, my conception of God is wisdom, love, and truth.

"Now, I have laid down twenty maxims for myself, the same number of years that I have lived here on earth. I will keep this diary and each year I will sum up what I have written, that I may see how much I have gained, not only in material substance, but in spiritual or heavenly things.

"There you lie, my jolly little mill! Next year, I will place by your side what I have cleared in money. Here you are, my little brown diary; and next New Year's day, I will credit myself for the amount of wisdom, love and truth, I have gained within the year. This brown paper, on which I am writing, is worth about one mill, also."

Mark took a pin from the lapel of his coat, and pinned the leaves of his diary together; then, laying it out, quite smoothly, he placed a large book upon it. The book was lying upon the commode, and proved to be a heavy volume of advertisements, left there for the benefit of the

guests, possibly, but in all probability, for the supposed benefit of those who advertised therein.

"You are all right," said Mark, speaking to the book. "I may want to consult you before the year is out."

Mark turned off the gas, "For," said he, "I will commence by being just to the landlord, and will not burn the gas when I do not need it."

He went to the window and drawing aside the curtain looked forth. The night was like an exquisite dream of Paradise. The moon was riding high in the heavens and Mark let his imagination take wings.

CHAPTER XV.

"SWEAR THAT YOU WILL MARRY ME."

"Ah!" said he, "you are a silver chariot, drawn by prancing, snow-white steeds, and within is seated the Goddess of Love. How magnetic and beautiful she is—how pure. She is scattering snow-drops over the sleeping Earth. She bends downward to kiss the radiant ocean as though it were a beauteous maid. The courtly stars surround her. She is like a queen in their midst. She kisses her hand to each one, throwing her snow-drops toward them.

"Beautiful, glorious, Queen of the Night! Your silvery mantle floats from you, in all directions, as you ride. How white the sands look in your rays—and that is Molly's black hulk, looming up yonder.

"Molly and Kester. Good old Kester! Sound asleep by this time, no doubt; and, just over in that direction, I see the lights from the Morton House, and just above the light is the window, where that beautiful girl sat and sighed, with her sweet face hidden in her arms.

"Ah! there is a couple, just out there, walking arm-in-arm on the sands, not far from the little brown cottage where that dark-eyed girl and her mother reside. Surely, it is very late for any young lady to be walking on the beach—that, if I mistake not, is the young man who looks like me—the millionaire. No, I am not mistaken. It is he; and the lady—it must be Miss Erie. No other young lady, whom I have ever seen, carries herself like that—haughty and graceful as a queen.

"He is bending over and kissing her hand, as sure as I live!

"Why, it is nearing midnight! She, really, ought to be in the house with her mother. If he is engaged to Miss Morton, as Uncle Nathan said, what right has he to be walking by moonlight and kissing the hand of another woman? That can mean but one thing—love-making. He must be false!

"O! how can he be false to that lovely girl? See,

they have seated themselves on that very bench, where I sat, so disconsolate, last night. Her hand is clasped in his—her face is upturned to his—he kisses her lips—the false-hearted knave! God grant that I may never be false to any woman!"

The couple arose and walked slowly toward the little brown cottage—one more kiss and the girl disappeared within the house—the young man turning his steps toward the hotel.

Yes, Marcus Chesterfield had, that very evening, engaged himself to Isabel Morton; and, in less than two hours thereafter, was making protestations of love to Jane Erie.

On returning to the hotel, Marcus met the girl, who had been sent there with a message from her mother to one of the ladies for whom she was doing some work.

The young man very gallantly offered to escort her to her home, for it was past nine o'clock. Secretly delighted, she accepted his proffered arm, and they continued strolling on the beach for an hour or more. Jane Erie was determined, in her own mind, that Marcus Chesterfield should make love to her; but she put on the semblance of great coyness, and this, coupled with her haughty bearing, inspired the young man with a desire to conquer, and they had not walked more than an hour before he was making love to her.

"You are as beautiful as a queen," said he, "and I greatly fear, as cold as an iceberg. You set my heart ablaze. Why do you draw away from me after that coy fashion? Do you consider it wrong for a young man to love a beautiful girl? To me, it is the most natural thing in the world."

"I do not consider it wrong," replied Jane, "but I hear that you are paying your respects to Isabel Morton, and I will not accept a second place in any man's heart. You cannot love me and Isabel at the same time."

"I swear to you," said Marcus, "that I do not love Isabel Morton."

"How does it happen, then, that you take her home from balls and parties in your carriage and visit at her house evening after evening? You were coming from her house when we met."

"Well, a man must have something to amuse and entertain him. Mrs. Morton invites me to her house, and then makes things lively and pleasant for me after I get there. There are music, card playing and so forth. My evenings at the hotel are dull and stupid, especially at this time of year."

"You tell me that you do not love Isabel Morton," said Jane, endeavoring to bring him round to the point once more. "Prove to me that you do not and I promise to look upon your suit more favorably."

"How can I prove it?" asked the young man. "Is not my word sufficient? I assure you, I do not love Isabel Morton."

"Why have you asked her to become your wife, then?"

Miss Erie sprung the question upon the young millionaire, to entrap him into a confession. She did not really know that he had asked Isabel to marry him, but she spiritually divined it.

"Who told you that I had asked her?"

"Well," answered Jane, "it was not a little bird, but I am clairvoyant, and with the eyes of my spirit I saw you, this evening, when you proposed to her; and my spirit can hear as well as see, and I heard you ask her to be your wife. I should not think you would care to marry a reluctant woman."

"By Jove! you are right. She is reluctant and no mistake—but she is a deuced pretty girl, and her mother is determined that I shall marry Isabel."

"If Mrs. Morton thinks more of you than her daughter does, why don't you marry her?"

"Well, now, a fellow cannot marry his grandmother, you know; moreover, I don't want to. I tell you, Miss Erie, you attract me more than any other woman I have ever met."

"Do I, indeed? But attraction is not necessarily love."

"No? How is a man to know, then, whether he loves or not?"

"I think," said Jane, "when a man really and truly loves a woman, he is willing to give up all things for her sake—even life itself—if necessary. You would not be willing to give up anything for my sake, although you say that you love me."

"But I am not called upon to give up anything," said Marcus.

"Do you love me enough to give up half your fortune for my sake? or, do you simply wish me to become a toy for your amusement?"

"Well, I have not given it much thought, as yet," replied Marcus. "You are beautiful, you attract me strongly, you set my heart ablaze with love. I really wish you were mine."

"At the same time you do not wish to marry me. You think I am low in the social scale—poverty-stricken—and all that," said Jane, with scarlet cheeks and blazing eyes. "But, let me tell you, sir, that I spurn such love as that, and you had better leave me to go on home alone," and she assayed to take her arm from his, but he held it firmly.

"Not so fast—not so fast!" exclaimed he, snatching her hand and kissing it. "I love you, Jane; but I want more time to think about it. I believe you would suit me better, as a wife, than Isabel Morton would. I am a rich man, as you know. I want a royal woman at the head of my establishment, a very queen—and you are royal. You are in poverty now, as you say; but if you could dress elegantly and move in refined society, you would be irresistible and the world would lie at your feet."

Jane set her teeth and drew her breath hard—clenching her hands until the nails marked the flesh.

"Riches I will have! The world shall lie at my feet; and when that time comes I will set my feet on the necks of those who now treat me with disdain."

"If you accept my love," said the young man, "you shall have all that you desire: money, elegant clothes, a beautiful house all your own, servants at your command; you shall have your own carriage, and do precisely, in all things, as you please."

"If I accept your love? What am I to understand by that? I scorn your love without marriage! You have not asked me to be your wife."

"Well, I'll be hanged if I can marry two women; the law don't allow it, you know."

"But you can break with Isabel."

"Yes; it would be very easy to break with her, I doubt not, but you forget her mother. I should rather face one of our modern iron-clad war ships than that woman. If I were to prove false to her daughter, she would blow me up like a sky-rocket—sue me for breach of promise—ruin me in society—and, between her and the courts, I should be stripped of all I have in the world."

"You would marry me if you were free? Is your love strong enough for that?"

"Well, I cannot say that I should want to marry you right here and now, but you could go away, where you are not known, and if you were to accept what I have offered you, people would think you were rich and then it would be all right."

"By all right you mean that you would marry me?"

"Well, yes. I think I would."

"But you shall swear that you would; and, if you were to break your oath, I would take your life! I would kill you as I would a viper beneath my feet!"

The young man shuddered.

"Come, Jane," he said, "love me a little, and give me a kiss."

"Will you promise me?" she continued. "Will you swear that if you are free, you will marry me?"

"I will do almost anything you wish. Now, kiss me. You must go in. It is growing late; besides, it is deuced cold out here on these sands," and he shivered.

"Swear it to me, then!" she hissed, with clenched hands and bated breath. "Swear that if you are free, you will marry me!"

"Yes; I swear it! Jane, I will marry you if I am free to do so."

Jane raised her face and they kissed each other passionately.

"And if you do not keep your vow, may you become like a dog without a master; may you starve without shelter in the streets; may you be kicked by every passerby; may your carcass remain unburied and become a stench in the nostrils of the people; may—"

"O heavens! Stop that tirade! I believe I am sorry already that I made such a promise. Don't go on like that. If you do, I am afraid I shall not keep it. But

here we are at your own door. Kiss me once more; and don't be so much in earnest."

"I will kiss you, but if you trifle with me—remember!"

She kissed him and disappeared within the house.

Mark, looking from his window, could not, of course, hear anything that was said. He simply saw them embrace and kiss each other.

Young Chesterfield hastened toward the hotel and was soon lost to view. Mark drew the curtains with a heavy sigh.

"I cannot change the career of that young man," said he, "but I can guide my own footsteps aright;" then, turning off that magical fire, he retired to rest.

CHAPTER XVI.

STRANGERS FROM NEW YORK.

The young millionaire ascended the steps of the hotel, muttering to himself:

"Marry you, indeed! Not if I know it."

As he passed through the office, the clerk informed him that two gentlemen awaited him in the reception room; and, going thither, he found two old acquaintances from New York.

"Ah! How do you do, Merry? And you, dear old chum, Alstain? Have been expecting you for some time. Did you get here by boat or train?"

"Oh, we came down from San Francisco on the boat. Much the pleasantest way of traveling in this part of the world, you know," answered Merry.

"Fine hotel, this," said Alstain. "Didn't have an idea that so much elegance existed this side of New York City. Think we must remain here for a week, at least."

"O! Can you? Will you? I am delighted!" exclaimed Chesterfield. "It's been deuced dull here for the last four weeks. It drives a man into mischief. What is that couplet about the devil finding plenty of work for idle hands? I have been obliged to remain here in order to settle up that mining business. Wish I could sell the whole thing out for a couple of million, or so."

"You told us that in your last letter, and that is why we are here," said Merry. "I am come to represent my father, and Alstain would like to make some investments for himself."

They sauntered out into the office.

"Can you give these gentlemen some nice apartments near mine?" asked Chesterfield, of the clerk.

"Yes, I have two fine suites on the same corridor—doors directly opposite your own," and he gave them the keys.

"We will make it a regular blow out tonight," said Chesterfield.

"Go and make yourselves charming, and then join me

in my apartments. Lewis," he continued, turning to his valet, "order up a dozen bottles of champagne, a box of best cigars, a bottle of brandy, a siphon of soda, some patti de froi gras, et cetera," and as the clock struck midnight, the three gentlemen were seated at the table, in Chesterfield's parlor, partaking of a bountiful midnight repast. Anecdotes and jests were bandied about, many of them not fit to be recorded here. Then cards were introduced, and the three drank champagne and gambled until the grey dawn. The stakes were not large, for the strangers dared not venture too far.

Merry had nothing but what his father saw fit to give him; and Alstain lived, mostly, by his wits, confidently expecting to amass his million as soon as an opportunity presented itself.

When the lights were turned off, they separated.

Strange as it may seem, Marcus Chesterfield had lost but one dollar and a half during the night.

Marcus Chesterfield reeled into his bed intoxicated as Mark Chester was rising from his rested and refreshed, with bright eyes and ruddy countenance. He plunged into a cold bath; then dressing himself with the utmost care, he descended to the breakfast room. Breakfast lasted from six until nine, and the six o'clock bell had just rung. Very few took their breakfasts so early. One or two clerks, a few brisk business men, three or four young girls—one a school-teacher and two who attended the counter of the principal dry-goods store in the little town; and when Mark's bright, clear eyes and fresh face appeared among them, it seemed to affect them like a healthful breeze. Nods and glances were exchanged, knives and forks clattered, coffee, boiled eggs and toast disappeared.

When Mark had finished his breakfast, he went back to his room, exchanged his nice clothes for those which Kester had loaned him, then, covering all with a long, light ulster, that he might appear decently while on his way to the beach, he took the path which led down to Kester and Molly.

"Hello, pardner!" called Kester. "E're airly, an' no mistake. Haint finished my coffee yit, an' thet thar sun's lazy. See; he's jest pintin' one finger over yender

mounting. Look now, he's pekin' over it hisself. Pears like he's a wigglin' his fingers agin his nose, a lafin at us, an' a askin' on us, 'How many yaller-tails air ye a goin' ter catch ter day?"

"Good morning, Uncle Kester," said Mark. "This is my first day, and I think we shall catch a good many. Dear old dad! I must call you dad some of the time, for you have been kinder to me than many fathers would have been to their sons."

"O, wall, call me anythin' yer like, 'cep bein' late ter fishin'. Look at Molly thar. She's a dancin' with expectation, as sure as yer live. That thar big wave 's jest reached her stern. Lend a hand thar, pardner, an' we'll slide her afloat. She's mor'n willin'."

Mark took off his ulster, folded it carefully, and put it out of harm's way on the old man's bed. He went to work with a will, and in five minutes Molly and her occupants were dancing on the waves of the Pacific. Mark rowed and the old man steered, and by the time they had reached Kester's favorite fishing ground, the sun had lifted his chin above the mountains and was smiling broadly at them, as they cast anchor. They both worked like beavers all day, and hauled Molly up on the beach, high and dry, just in the gloaming.

Mark built a fire. The coffee was made, the fish broiled, the brown bread and beans—the Yankee's delight—were brought forth. A Chinaman's vegetable cart usually passed there at this hour, and he readily exchanged a few vegetables for a small fish or two. Moreover, they were well supplied with eggs; for many of the poor women at the settlement of tents and shanties were glad to exchange eggs and poultry for fish; and now they partook heartily of a good dinner.

Mark had already come to the conclusion that meat was not necessary in this Southern climate—and, in fact, the less meat one eats in Southern California the better. When they had finished their dinner, they cleaned and weighed the fish and found they had twenty dollars' worth.

"Gewhiteker!" exclaimed Nathan. "Pardner, you bring good luck. Ten dollars apiece—sure as yer live! Whew! Golly! If we go on like thet, we'll git rich."

Their work was not entirely finished until nearly ten o'clock, then Mark put on his ulster and went to the hotel.

"Ah, little diary," he said as he entered his room, "there you are, and I will make my entry at once. 'January 2, 1899. First day out. Have earned ten dollars.' Not so bad that. Feel quite weary, still I should like to read from some good book for about an hour. Must find out if there is a Public Library in town; but as I have no book, think I will commence to write one myself. No paper? Well, now I think of it, I saw a lot of nice, manilla wrapping paper, together with paper bags of large size, in the dust barrel as I came through the small back hall-way. I will go down and make a raid;" and, suiting his actions to his words, he descended the stairs and gathered from the aforesaid dust barrel an armful of waste paper; returning to his own pleasant room, he cut the paper into the required sheets and wrote busily until eleven o'clock; then, going to the window, he looked out.

"Good night, Uncle Kester and Molly," he said. "I think the good old man is asleep by this time." Turning, he waved his hand toward the Morton House. "Good night, sweet, sorrowful Isabel. I do not see a light from your window, so I conclude you are asleep also. May kind and loving angels watch over you. And you, Jane Erie; what of you? There is no light at the little brown cottage, and you are not straying tonight with a false-hearted man. Heaven guard and keep you in the right path."

Then Mark retired to sleep soundly, as healthful youth ever does when its aims are honorable and its conscience clear.

* * * * *

Marcus Chesterfield arose at three in the afternoon. He did not feel refreshed; on the contrary, he was exhausted and feverish. He could not have been half as weary if he had worked at some kind of manual labor for sixteen hours on a stretch.

His eyes were sunken with heavy black circles beneath them. He could scarcely stand upright, and it would

have been impossible for him to speak pleasantly to anyone.

"Here, Lewis! Get me into my clothes, will you? but ring, first, and have some coffee sent up directly! I am not equal to the exertion of being dressed until I have had a cup of coffee."

And he sank back upon the bed again.

"Hurry up, will you! You're as slow as a snail! What have you been doing all the morning, you lazy Jackanapes?"

"I can't be up at all times of night and work all day besides," replied Lewis, with a yawn. "I have not been up long, myself. It was daylight before we got to bed, sir—but here is your coffee, sir. You will feel better when you have taken it."

Marcus sipped a little from the cup.

"Zounds, fellow! Why did you not put cream and sugar into it?"

"Oh, sir, believe me, sir, it is better to take it black, and strong, when you are weak and ill."

"Ill—ill? I am not ill. What should make me ill, I should like to know? Can't a man drink a few glasses of champagne without being ill?"

He gulped down a cup of the black, strong coffee. This revived him somewhat.

"Put me into my bath, Lewis. No doubt I shall be all right as soon as I am dressed. Then order the best breakfast the house can afford. At the same time tell the coachman to have the horses ready. I shall take a long drive. Also see if my friends are up. If so, ask them to step here a moment—or, wait, I will write."

He hurriedly dashed off a note of invitation, asking them to accompany him in his carriage for a good ten-mile drive, at least.

Lewis brought back the reply, that they would only be too glad of the opportunity.

After his bath and breakfast the young millionaire pulled himself together, with the aid of brandy and soda, and by the time the three gentlemen were ready to step into the carriage, Marcus felt quite like himself again. Still his youthful face wore a jaded look. Dissipation

always leaves its mark, and idleness weakens the constitution as well as the mind.

Marcus ordered the horses put to their utmost speed, and when the party returned to the hotel, just in time for dinner, the poor horses were white with foam.

"They'll not stand this sort of driving," remonstrated the coachman.

"What is that to you!" thundered Marcus. "There are plenty of other horses to be had for a mere song. Horses are cheap in this part of the world," he remarked, turning to his companions, "consequently, I propose to drive as fast as I please."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FATAL APPOINTMENT

Of course, Marcus Chesterfield felt that he must entertain his friends; so a couple of other young men, who were staying at the hotel, were invited to spend the evening in the young man's apartments, and be introduced to the strangers from New York. After dinner, before retiring within doors, all five were seated on the veranda, smoking, laughing, and jesting. A young lady came down the road, from town; a graceful, queenly looking girl. She flashed a brilliant glance at young Chesterfield, as she passed, and bowed.

"Jane Erie, as I live," said Marcus, under his breath. "Ugh! How her eyes go through a fellow!"

"That was a handsome girl," said Alstain, perceiving that she was not unknown to the young millionaire. "Too handsome, altogether, for a village maid. Such beauty as that is buried here in this out of the way place."

"Who is she?" asked Merry.

"Oh, simply a nobody," sneered Marcus. "She lives with her mother, and they starve the most of the time, so I have heard. The old lady takes in sewing, when she can get it to do; but I imagine the girl is laying her net to snare some grand eagle, or other."

Then the five young men joked each other about women, slyly jesting Marcus about the young woman who had just passed. He did not resent it, but entered into the spirit of it with enjoyment and laughter.

We will not record the disgraceful innuendoes and sly jokes which passed between these idle young men—words and meanings which should forever have disgraced them in the eyes of all well meaning people; but nothing more than what passes between such young gentlemen in all places where they congregate.

No man, who is a true gentleman, will ever speak of any woman as he would not speak of his mother or sister.

The evenings are very chill in Southern California at this season of the year, although the sun shines hotly at midday, and the young gentlemen repaired to Chesterfield's room. Another dozen bottles of champagne were ordered, another costly lunch was sent up for five—the very costliest that the house could furnish—cards were again resorted to, and by eleven o'clock, the time Mark Chester laid his weary head on his pillow, they were drinking and gambling to their heart's content, keeping it up until the gray dawn, and reeling to bed as on yestermorn, but this time, Marcus had lost ten dollars. This, to him, was of course a trifle not to be considered, but ten dollars would have made some starving, suffering fellow creature comfortable; and one could easily hurl a stone from the hotel into that settlement before mentioned, where many were gaunt with hunger.

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Jane Erie knew very well that the promise of marriage had been extorted by herself from the young millionaire; nevertheless, it was a promise, although but a verbal one. She desired a written agreement—something that she could make use of in case Marcus should not be inclined to keep his promise.

She sat now, in her own little room, meditating, her face wearing an intent but far-away look. Her hands were tightly clenched, for her thoughts were extremely exasperating.

"I must have letters from him," she mused, "love letters. I must, also, have written promises of marriage; for if he were, by any means, to marry Isabel—if I fail to break up the match—then I must have evidence enough to convict him for breach of promise of marriage. I will sue him for a large sum of money and take all that the law will allow me. There is an excellent lawyer in this town, if it is small, and many a landholder, around here, has lost all his property by the aid of the Law, through this precious rascal. He will only be too glad to get a chance at Marcus Chesterfield and his millions. To be sure, I am well aware that he would take the lion's share, still, there would be something left for me. Jane Erie will never remain in poverty while

there are rich men in the world. Marcus thinks I am a poor little fool, whom he can easily persuade."

Her eyes flashed at the thought.

"Men think all women are soft fools, who ought to adore and pay them homage; but Chesterfield shall find one woman in the world whom he cannot bend or break; one woman in the world, who will compel him to do her homage. He shall yet sue for my hand, in honorable marriage, on bended knee; he shall yet throw his millions at my feet, and I will spurn him and them—or appear to do so.

"Love him? I detest him! I do not believe there is a man living who could inspire me with the grand passion; if so, I have not yet seen him. Ah! Mr. Chesterfield, it is your money I want, not yourself particularly; but, of course, the way to get your money is through yourself. Money I will have or die! But I will not die. I was born into this world to live, not die; and I am determined to live. I know there is a future life. No one can understand this better than myself; for have I not the power of seeing and conversing with the denizens of another world? But I desire to live in this world, at all hazards, for many years to come; and I will not lead a miserable, poverty-stricken life. To be rich, and consequently happy, requires nothing more than the exercise of the will. The human will is superior to all mundane things, and those who have strong wills conquer those who possess weaker ones. The only way to strengthen the will is by the exercise of it, just as the muscles of the body are strengthened by the using of them. I do not wish to leave this town; and, if I did, I have not the means to do so, now. Ah! I have it! I saw strange gentlemen with him this evening. That means but one thing. They are all going up to the mines. I must find out how long they are to remain there. I must see Marcus again. He must write me many letters while he is away, and there must be a written proposal of marriage in one, or more, of them. Yes, I must see him this very evening; otherwise, all may be lost. But how am I to make sure of this? There is but one way. I must send him a note, asking for an interview. After what has passed between us, it

will be perfectly proper to do so. Still, I care very little for the proprieties. My own will is queen. The proprieties are prudes and handmaidens to be made use of if one needs them. I shall never make myself a slave to the proprieties."

She went to a small table and dashed off a note.

"Dearest Marcus: Please meet me this evening at eight o'clock, at the lonely old bench on the beach, where we plighted our troth. I have something of great importance to say to you. Do not fail to be there, for I have been considering, deeply, the proposals which you then made to me."

"That will be sure to fetch him, I think. He will imagine that I have concluded to look with a favorable eye on the proposals he made to me. Bah! How disgusting! On the contrary, it fills my soul with hatred and loathing.

"He takes me for a soft fool, captivated by his handsome personality, his distinguished appearance. Why, that tall young fisherman, who has lately associated himself with old Kester, that young man who looks so much like Marcus Chesterfield, that poor boy who probably has not a cent in the world, that cleaner of fish, with his bright, clear eyes, his ruddy, healthful cheeks, his tall, straight form, his powerful arm and muscles of steel—for they must be as strong as steel, else he could not row a boat as he does—that tall, straight young man, who seems to look neither to the right nor the left, and yet is so genial and polite to all whom he meets, is a thousand times more attractive to my eyes than the rich and dissipated Marcus Chesterfield. I am capable of loving that young fisherman with all my heart, but to marry him would be entirely out of the question. It certainly would be impossible not to admire him, and, really, I should like to gain his love. Suppose I have two or three lovers? What of it? They might be of service to me. A young girl has a right to be a coquette if she pleases, and as for broken hearts, I believe men are devoid in that respect, they have no hearts to break. It is the heart that is missing in a man, and not the rib. Well, heigh-ho! I must go and mail my note or he may not get it in time."

She donned her walking attire and took her way up the little path toward the town, and the note was soon on its way to the hotel, within the pouch of the mail carrier. The note was handed to Marcus just after dinner; and it was fortunate for Jane Erie that he received it on this day, for on the morrow he was to dine and spend the evening at the Morton house.

He also had sent a note to Mrs. Morton, begging to be allowed to bring his friends, as he greatly desired to make them acquainted with Mrs. Morton and Isabel.

He had received a cordial invitation for his friends somewhat earlier in the afternoon, and they were all to remain and play whist in the evening.

Marcus read Jane's note, and a wily look darted from his eyes.

"Fortunate for you, my young lady, that I got your note in time, else you would not have had the pleasure of my company. Well, it's all right. I think she has, probably, concluded to do as I wish. I have a year's grace and much can be enjoyed within a year's time. I shall, no doubt, be weary of Miss Erie by that time or before; and, even if she should cling to me, I can conceal her in Los Angeles. She might, possibly, threaten to inform Isabel but plenty of money will buy her silence, no doubt; and, even if it could not, young men are expected to sow some wild oats.

He put his hand to his forehead. A saying occurred to him and it was this:

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap. Sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind." A thought flashed through his mind: "Would Jane Erie prove to be the whirlwind that he would reap? Well, perhaps so. She certainly was rather breezy, even now. Well, a man must enjoy his life in some way, especially when he has plenty of money wherewith to gratify his desires."

He excused himself to his friends, saying he had a former engagement for the evening; and shortly before eight o'clock, he sauntered forth to keep the appointment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RELUCTANT PROMISE.

Mark and the old fisherman did not meet with the same success every day. There were many days when the fish refused to bite. There were days when they were shy and few were taken. Today had been one of their shy days, and about half as many as usual had been caught. It had been some hours, now, since they had felt a bite, and the old man said:

"I think, pardner, we hed better go in shore. Them thar yaller-tails 'll bite no more ternight. I know thar ways fur sartin. They air as shy an' coy today as a young maid—as Molly wus now, fur instance, long 'bout the time I fust seed her. You wouldn't a thought she'd ever a cared fur me then, but I jest let her hev her own way, an' thet's jest what we'd better dew with this 'ere fish—jest let um hev thar own way. They'll bite all the better termorrer."

So it happened that Molly was drawn up on the beach, and Mark and Kester were just eating their dinner, when Marcus sauntered down toward the lone bench where Mark had sat on the evening of his arrival at Redondo.

"Hush! Whew!" muttered old Kester, setting down his coffee-cup. "Ef thet thar hain't thet air millioner—thet thar yung Chesterfield—Marcus, his name is, an' it's kinder funny, too, thet he looks like you, an' his name is like yourn, too. Mark Chester an' Marcus Chesterfield air somewhat alike, ain't they?"

"Simply a coincidence," replied Mark in a low voice; "but, look yonder. Is not that the form of a woman coming from the little brown cottage?"

"'Tis, as sure as yer live, an' it's Jane—Jane Erie. Thet thar gal 'd better look out fur herself. Millioners don't mean no good ter such gals as Jane Erie. They jest fish arter them to destroy them."

"Did you not tell me that the young man was betrothed to Miss Morton?"

"Well, thet's what everybody sez 'round here—moreover, I see a item ter that effect in this mornin's Redondo News. Guess it's true enough."

"Then by what right does he meet Jane Erie out here on the sands, after dark, when the beach is sure to be lonely and deserted? Besides, they were together here at eleven o'clock, a few evenings since, and I saw him kiss her more than once."

"Her mother ought ter know on't," said the old man sorrowfully. "Think I'll gwup thar, arter we git through here, an' hev a talk with her."

"Perhaps you had better go now, uncle—as soon as you finish your dinner. I will see to the fish and put all things to rights, and will stay here until your return."

"Wall, I'll go; but I don't think it'll do much good. Thet gal hes it all her own way. She's a tarnal sight smarter then her mother ever wus, but I am afeard it's in the wrong direction. Howsumever, I'll gwup an' hev a good talk—an', no doubt, Mrs. Erie will like a fish, fur she hes more'n she can do, sometimes, ter keep ther wolf frum the door."

Mr. Kester selected a very fine fish, then making himself a little more presentable, he immediately started for the cottage. Jane Erie, by this time, was seated on the bench beside Marcus Chesterfield. She had greeted her lover with a fond kiss, for lover he should be, whatever happened. Marcus found it impossibe to resist her blandishments, and winding his arm about her, they strolled farther away into the darkness. They had both perceived the boat and the small fire near it, also the dim outlines of the two fishermen. Not that Marcus Chesterfield cared for a couple of low fishermen—"coarse, ignorant beasts," he called them,—but, still, it was pleasant to be quite out of sight and hearing.

* * * * *

"Well, Jane," he said, when they were safe out into the darkness, "you have, no doubt, concluded to be reasonable, and are thinking more favorably of the proposal which I made to you the last time we met."

Miss Erie did not make a direct reply to this, but asked, instead:

"You are going to the mines, shortly, are you not?"

"Yes; but I shall soon return, and I have time, before going, to settle you in Los Angeles, in comfort and affluence."

"How about my mother?" asked Jane.

"Your mother? Ah! I had not thought of her. Could she not go with you?"

"If I were married, certainly, yes."

"But, dear, it is impossible for us to marry at present."

"If I were to take my mother to Los Angeles, and live in affluence, she would ask me how I became possessed of such means. What reply could I make?"

Marcus was silent.

"My mother would starve before she would live in affluence obtained through the dishonor of her child—her only child. My mother loves me, although I am not all that a mother could desire in a daughter."

"Well, then, why not go without your mother?"

"Shall I desert the mother who has toiled for me for many years? Shall I leave her desolate and dishonored in her old age? Marcus Chesterfield, I am wicked and weirdly strange, and do not help my mother as I ought. All this I know; but I am not yet so vile and sinful as to desert my mother and plunge myself into a whirlpool of gilded vice and consequent misery. No, not quite so bad as that yet, thank God. No; I will remain here and try to help and please my mother more than I have in the past. But, Marcus, dear, as we are now promised to each other, will you not write to me every day while you are away?"

"Dearest Jane, cannot I induce you to change your mind? It will be far easier for your mother to take care of herself than to provide for two. You really ought not to be a burden to your mother longer. You are fully eighteen years of age, are you not?"

"Yes; I am somewhat past eighteen—in my nineteenth year."

"Old enough to do as you please."

"Yes; and I do very much as I please. I have been a very thankless, headstrong girl, thus far; but my mother has been most loving and patient with me, and, at last, it begins to tell on my wayward and stubborn disposi-

tion. Oh, I would that I were naturally as good as my mother; but, I am the daughter of my father, and he was not a good man. Do you know, Marcus, that the two natures within me are constantly at war, making my life miserable? The union between my father and mother was not a happy one. He deserted her, many years ago, as, perhaps, you have heard; and he treated her badly the few years of their married life. Sometimes my mother's nature predominates in me; but, oftener, that of my father. O, Marcus, would that I had been born good."

"Why, you are good enough, are you not? Too good, it seems, to yield to my wishes; and yet, I do not think you would be bad to do as I desire."

"Marcus Chesterfield, I have no wish to become a toy, but a queen, before whom the world will bow down in adoration; a toy is soon cast aside as worthless, but I must wear a crown—but, promise me, dear, that you will write to me every day while you are away."

"I suppose I must promise, then, if I cannot persuade you to go to Los Angeles with me; I am sure, Jane, that you will regret not doing so."

"I should regret it, for the remainder of my life, if I were to do so. Then I have your promise, dear Marcus, that you will write to me?"

"Well, I suppose I must; but I cannot see what good it will do. I shall not remain away long, and writing letters is a bore; still, if you insist, I suppose I must."

Marcus now began to make passionate love to Miss Erie, but this we will not record, for it was not the pure, unselfish love of a generous heart—it was not the love which a man feels for the woman he would marry. Marcus Chesterfield was not capable of a pure, unselfish love. Even the love which he would offer to the woman whom he might wish to marry would not be much better, the distinction would be, simply, that one he might consider high enough in the social scale, the other, too low. His love would not be pure in either case, and, even at this moment, his love, or, rather, passion, was stronger for Jane Erie than it was for Isabel Morton.

CHAPTER XIX.

LOVE IN A COTTAGE.

The old fisherman knocked at the door of the little brown cottage. Mrs. Erie opened the door. She looked pale, worn and troubled.

"Ah! Good evening, Mr. Kester," she said. "I am very glad to see you. Walk in."

Nathaniel stepped into the room.

"Wall, now, marm," said he, "how-de-dew, this 'ere evening? I hope yer find yerself well an' comferterble like?"

"Yes, Mr. Kester, I am quite well, for me, thank you."

The old fisherman walked to the sink, within the little kitchen, which joined itself to the room he had entered, and laid the fish on the cold zink; then, he took off his overcoat and hung it on a peg nearby, together with his hat. Mrs. Erie looked at him, the while, with a pensive smile. Having done so, he stepped softly back into the room. Mrs. Erie gave him both her hands.

"How kind of you, Mr. Kester—how very kind! I can never thank you enough! Come and take a seat in this large arm-chair. You must be very weary, sitting in that uncomfortable boat all day."

Nathaniel sank into the chair with a sigh of contentment, his countenance beaming benevolently.

There was a small fireplace in the room, wherein smouldered a few embers, but the evening was growing chill, and Mrs. Erie placed one or two fagots upon the fire and a cheerful blaze leaped forth. The arm-chair was in the most comfortable corner of the chimney-piece. Uncle Kester rubbed his hands softly together. How cheerful and homelike the room looked, although the furniture was mean and no carpet covered the floor.

A small table stood near, with a shaded lamp upon it. Mrs. Erie took a seat by the table and commenced to stitch, stitch, stitch. Her face was pale, her shoulders drooped, a look of sorrowful, patient resignation rested upon her features. She could not have been more than forty years of age. Her forehead was well developed,

the thin hair, rapidly growing gray, combed smoothly back of the small, delicate ears. She had deep-set gray-blue eyes, but there were circles of weariness beneath them. The mouth was small, the lips firm but very sweet; the only color about the face being in those sensitive lips. Altogether, her appearance was that of a delicate, high-toned, sensitive, loving woman, who was suffering under the iron hand of poverty, patient and resigned to her fate. Uncle Kester's eyes rested upon her tenderly, pityingly.

"Wall, now, marm," said he, "jest you set up nearer the fire here, an' give yerself a rest. I wants ter talk with yer fur a little while. Yer jest let me gin yer this 'ere five dollars fur yer time, fur I can't expect yer ter gin me yer precious time fur nothin'."

Mrs. Erie laid down her work, but repudiated the money.

"No, no! Mr. Kester," she said, "I cannot accept money from any one, although I am very grateful to you for the fish. You earn your money very hardly, and why should I not work as well as you?"

"Wall, marm, 'es fer thet marter, you do double or treble work. Ter take care o' this little house is all ther wurk yer ought ter dew, while someone else airns ther wherewithal. Now look a here, marm; yer jest take this 'ere five dollars, fur I want ter hev sum wurk dun. I am greatly in need of a couple o' flannel shirts, an' I can't make them thar shirts. I couldn't bring in ther flannel ternight, but I'll send it ter yee airly in ther mornin', an' yer must take ther money now, marm, fur I may not be able ter cum ter see yer agin fur a long time."

Mrs. Erie gave him a penetrating glance; but as he looked as if he were in earnest, she gladly took the money. She needed it badly, for Jane and herself had both felt the gnawing of hunger of late, and the rent was due.

Uncle Kester's eyes twinkled delightedly as Mrs. Erie folded up her work; then she drew her chair a little nearer the fire and sat gazing into it abstractedly.

"Wall, now, marm, thet's more comfortable like," and he settled himself back with a sigh. "Yer see, marm,

I am gitting a leetle tired o' Molly evenin's an' nights, an' I hev ben eatin' my dinner alone this many a year; an' this 'ere place, now, seems more homelike. My old bones is gittin' a leetle stiff an' rumatic, yer see. Molly, she's made me as comfortable as she could—ther good, stanch, old gal;—but then, she's only a boat, arter all, an' yer can't expect too much outen a boat, yer know."

"Yes, I should think it would be quite wearisome to remain out-of-doors all the time," asserted Mrs. Erie.

"Wall, marm, when yer cum ter think on't, it is. But when a man hes no wife, nor no home, he kin jest make a boat dew him, somehow; an' Molly—old Molly—she's ben very kind ter me an' made me as comfortable as she could. I shouldn't want ter seem thankless ter Molly, yer know."

Mrs. Erie smiled at the old man's conceit.

"Well," she said, "it is fortunate that the boat does not possess a mind, otherwise, of course, she might feel hurt."

"But there's somewhat else about Molly. She's named arter Molly, yer see; an' tother Molly, she knows, I guess, though she's ben in thet other world this 'ere many a year."

"Do you mean that she is dead?" asked Mrs. Erie.

"Wall, thet would be what sum folks would call it; but, sum how or nuther, I can't jest make it out as she is dead. 'Pears like as though she jest lived right thar in thet thar boat with me, or, ruther, thet she jest hovered over me an' it; jest like a little turtle-dove, yer know, a spreadin' its purty wings out ter pertect us. Can't seem ter git it outen my mind; an' then when I goes ter sleep, 'pears like as she wus a sweet angel as kissed an' comforted me, fur, marm, ter tell ther truth, it's ruther a lonely life ter lead, fur a man as hes no home, nor no wife, an' fishes all day by hisself, an' eats by hisself, an' sleeps by hisself, an' talks to hisself; an' then, yer see, marm, ef I gits sick down thar in thet thar boat, it would be ruther hard, yer see."

"Indeed, it would, Mr. Kester, very hard."

"I wouldn't hev even a darter ter giv me a drink, es you hev, marm. In thet respect, you air better off nor me."

"Jane is a good girl," said Mrs. Erie; "still, I feel much anxiety on her account."

"Whar may she be now, marm, thet she's not here with you?"

"I supposed she was in her own room until a moment before you knocked. I wanted to speak with her, but on opening her door I found she had gone out without my knowledge. It is eight o'clock and quite dark, which makes me very uneasy about her."

"May be she has a lover, marm."

"O, no; she has never yet received visits from any gentleman. Really, Jane is not acquainted with any young man, to my knowledge. Probably she will be in directly."

"There air young men as don't care ter hev a gal's mother know when ther gal meets him out on the sands in the dark."

"What do you mean, Mr. Kester?" and Mrs. Erie's eyes wore a frightened expression.

"Wall, now, I don't like ter make any more trouble fur ye, marm; but I think as how yer darter Jane is a walkin' now on ther beach with thet thar yung millioner, Marcus Chesterfield."

"O, Mr. Kester! It cannot be possible. He could never think of Jane as a lover; besides, he is engaged to be married to Isabel Morton."

"Wall, thet's jest it," responded the old man. "Ef he wus free an' clear, an' he loved Jane, an' wanted ter marry her, yer wouldn't hev seen me here ternight, perhaps; but, then, arter all, perhaps yer might. Something sort o' draws me here, whether I keer ter cum or not. Now, marm, yer darter is out thar a walkin' on thet thar beach with thet thar yung millioner, as don't want ter marry her, an' as is engaged ter another gal; an' I jest seed um a goin' off in ther darkness, arm-in-arm, jest as lovers should; an' I sed ter myself, as how her marm oughter know on't; fur I tuck it fur granted thet yer didn't know about it."

Mrs. Erie groaned aloud.

"O, Mr. Kester!" she sobbed, wringing her hands. "What am I to do about it? Jane will not listen to anything I may say. Must I see my child go to her ruin?"

"Wall, no marm. She shall not go ter her ruin ef we kin help it; but, perhaps, it may not be quite so bad es thet. She is a pretty fair-minded gal, is Jane."

"That is very true," replied Mrs. Erie, more cheerfully. "She has such strength and purpose of will, that I believe she would die rather than yield to anything she could, or would not, approve of; and, with all her faults, she has never shown the least leaning toward vice. I thank you, Mr. Kester, for letting me know of this; for, when she returns, I shall have a long and serious talk with her."

"Spcakin' o' lovers, marm, dew yer think thet an' old man hes no right ter thet thar epithet?"

Mrs. Erie laughed.

"I suppose," she answered, "that there may be many old men who love very devotedly."

"An' shuld yer think, marm, as how I mightn't be one o' them old men, as would love devotedly, as would cherish my wife, ef I hed one; as would pervide fur my wife, ef I hed one; as would love my home, ef I hed one; as would make a lady of my wife, in so far as I could; as would take all the heavy burdens off my wife, ef I hed one?"

"I feel sure that you are a man like that."

"I thank yer, marm; I thank yer kindly, marm, fer yer good 'pinion o' me. Wall, now, marm, a man can't be a lover like thet, unless he meets a lady who would be willin' ter become his wife, an' let him love, an' pervide, an' pertect her, can he, now, marm?"

"Certainly not," answered Mrs. Erie. "But you are so good and kind, Mr. Kester, I think there might be a great many poor, lonely women, who would love you very dearly—oh, very dearly, indeed!"

"But yer see, marm, I don't want a great many wimen; I jest wants one, an' no more nor no less."

"Yes." And Mrs. Erie's eyes drooped beneath his bright and eager glance.

"Now thet one woman, as I love, an' want ter make my wife, an pervide fur, an pertect, hes a only darter, an' I would like ter be a father ter thet thar gal."

"O, would you?" said Mrs. Erie, clasping her hands.

"Yes; an' ef I wus a father ter thet thar gal, I would

pertect her, an' pervide fur her; an' then, when a cussed millioner cum around, enticing of her out in the dark, on thet thar beach, I would horsewhip him within a inch o' his life, cuss him! Now, marm, you air thet thar woman as I love, an' as I wants ter pervide fur, an' as I wants ter pertect. You air the truest, an' best, an' purtiest little woman as ever I seed, 'cept Molly—always, 'cept Molly. But Molly, she hes ben a angel this twenty year or more, an' she sed to me in a dream, last night:

" 'Nathan—Nathan! Listen to me. Go an' marry thet purty little woman, thet I know yer love, an' I won't be jealous o' yer. Yer must hev someone ter look arter yer, an' love yer in yer old age; an' she's the best little woman as ever lived, an' she's poor, an' she's in trouble, an' she's no one ter pervide fur her, an' love her.' An' then I sez ter Molly, sez I: 'But, perhaps thet thar little woman don't love me; perhaps thet thar little woman won't hev me; an' ef I axed her, an' she sed no, I shuld be more lonely an' heart-sick then before.' An' Molly, she sed: 'Thet thar little woman does love yer, Nathan, though yer old—perhaps ten year older then she—an' yer a rough old fisherman, Nathan. Thet don't make no difference, Nathan; thet thar little woman, she sees down deeper'n all thet, an' she knows thet yer hart is big, an' thet yer hart is good.'—Now it wus Molly an' not me thet sed thet thar. I am jest tellin' yer what Molly sed —'an' thet yer wud make her a good husban', an' pervide fur her, an' pertect her an' her darter. Of course, Nathan, yer only a old fisherman, an' yer never hed no larnin'—yer ought ter hev study'd grammar, Nathan. Now yer jest go an' tell thet thar little woman thet yer love her; an' yer'll make yerself an' her both happy an' contented.' Now I dew wish yer wud cum here an' set down on my knee, an' put yer little arms aroun' my neck, an' say, 'Nathan, I love yer! an' I will marry yer, an' I will be yer wife, so help me God!' "

Mrs. Erie burst into tears, and going to the old fisherman she threw her arms about his neck and buried her tearful face in his bosom.

"O, Nathaniel!" she sobbed. "I do love you. I have loved you for a long time. You are so good—you are so kind—you are so loving! Who could help loving you?"

CHAPTER XX.

"HOLD YER ROWERS, NATHAN —HOLD YER ROWERS."

The old man raised the head of the woman he had learned to love in spite of Molly the angel, or, rather, in accordance with the wishes of that angel, in spite of Molly the boat, and wiping the tears from her eyes, with her own little handkerchief, he tenderly kissed the sweet lips, fondling her head the meanwhile, as a father fondles the head of his child, smoothing the faded hair as he said:

"Thar, thar! Don't cry my purty. Yer shall never shed another tear ef old Kister kin help it, an' yer shall never take another stitch fur them thar proud wimen-folks up thar at thet thar hotel. No, my purty; old Kister's got money enough fur to buy this ere little cot, which is jest big enough fur you an' me, an' Kister he'll fence in a little gardin at the back, an' yer shall hev a lot o' flowers. Moreover, Kister, he'll put a nice little porch over the front door, an' we will train roses all over it; an' in thet thar back gardin yer shall hev yer chickens an' yer turkeys, an' Kister 'll buy a hoss, an' a cow, an' yer shell hev yer little buggy ter ride in; an' then yer may ride up thar, parst thet thar hotel, an' look peart like; an' yer shell hev a new bunnet, an' some new gownds, an' nobudy shell ever look down on yer no more; ef they do, ole Kister 'll be in ther har, right off; an' then, perhaps, yer'll go out with me in Molly onct in a while. Oh, we'll put the posies back inter them pale cheeks," he continued, pinching them softly and kissing them, "an' ther blue shine inter these ere eyes. I never hed the chance of doin' all sech things fur Mollie, fur she died, poor gal; but I will do all ther more fur you, my purty; an' then yer shell make ther old man's coffee, an' fry ther old man's fish, an' bile his eggs fur him, an' mend his old torn coat an trouses, an' make his shirts fur him; but yer shell make no shirts fur no other man livin'."

Mrs. Erie's pale face was lying against the old man's breast during this time, tears resting on her cheeks but

a happy smile on her lips. Her arms tightened about his neck as she drew down the grizzled head, kissing him on either cheek, his forehead and his hairy neck. He was large, hairy, long and powerful, while she was rather small, pale and delicate looking.

"O! Nathaniel; you are so good, so loving, so kind. How happy I shall be! No more sorrow, no more loneliness, no more stitch, stitch, stitch. The song of the shirt will not hum its eternal refrain in my ears. Oh, Nathan, darling; how did you know that I wanted a little garden in front of the cottage and a porch, a back yard with trees, chickens and turkeys? There is a whole acre of land belonging to this cottage, dear. Oh, how I have longed to have this little place for my own; how I have longed to have that little rose porch over the front door. How did you know all this? I never told anyone."

"Wall; a sea-gull telled me when he quacked; Molly, she telled me when she rocked herself on them thar waves out thar. The sun he telled it ter me when he lifted his bright, laffin' face up outen ther fog behind them thar mountins; the moon, she whispered it ter me softly, an' pears like she winded us together in her wide white mantle; an' all ther little stars shot ther arrers at me, fur all on them ware so many little cupids, but they wearn't blind, fur ther arrers went inter my hart, an' ther eyes looked straight toward this little, lone, black house, outen here on this 'ere beach—an' thet reminds me, sweet—yer shell hev this ere little house painted white, or, perhaps, yer'd ruther hev it yaller, in honor o' my yaller-tails, fur I hev made ther money thet'll pay fur ther paintin' of it, a catchin' o' them thar yaller-tails. Perhaps yer'll like it painted red, or sea-green, or sky-blue—oh, any color yer'd like best, my purty; or how wud yer like it a painted of a dove-color? fur it will be the bidin' place o' two turkle doves, sure's my name's Kester—Nathaniel Kester; an' thet reminds me—an' your name 'll be Kester too, now, won't it?"

"I hope so," sighed Mrs. Erie.

"An' your name's Erie now. This ere lone, black place looks more like the nest o' a raven then it do like ther erie o' an eagle."

"But, Jane! Jane! Jane!" exclaimed Mrs. Erie. "Jane

is the eagle. She is the soaring bird. God grant that she may find an erie suited to her lofty ambition." The poor lady started up. "We have forgotten Jane, entirely, in our great happiness. What about Jane? Oh, where is the child now? Why does she not return? Nathan, Nathan, I hope no harm will come to her."

"Make yerself easy, my purty dear, no harm shell cum ter Jane. Jane shell be my darter as well as yourn, an' wo' betide ther man thet looks at her with a hawk's eye. I'll bring him low, I'll bring him low! I haint got no larnin', but I hev got a mighty powerful fist, an' ther man es wrongs my darter 'll feel it."

"O, Nathan, dear Nathan; it is nine o'clock and she is not here yet; what ought we to do?"

Nathan arose. He gently placed Mrs. Erie in the large arm chair wherein he had been sitting.

"Now set thar, an' jest be quiet an' easy like, an' don't fret nor nothin'. I'll look arter thet thar gal an' thet thar yung millioner."

Mr. Kester went into the kitchen, took down his hat and coat and put them on, then returning to where Mrs. Erie sat, he took her in his powerful arms, somewhat as a father does his little child, kissed her fondly a half dozen times or more, then replaced her, stroked her hair softly with his great rough hand.

"Now set thar quiet, while I go ter see ter things. I hev ther right now, but until yer sed yer'd be my wife, I cud not, very well, interfere twixt a man an' a gal as wus nothin' ter me; but now yer've gin me ther right—ther right o' a father, I'll see whuther thet yung millioner wants ter marry Jane er no. Not but what Jane's good enuf fur eny man, whuther or no he hes a mill er a million, but maybe thet yung man hes a different mind, which I'll soon find out. I'll cum back ter yer purty soon, turkle-dove, an' bring yer eaglet ter yer. Strange," he muttered to himself as he closed the door, "thet such a dove shud nest a eaglet."

The old fisherman strode forth, with swinging steps, into the darkness. Jane Erie and Marcus Chesterfield had returned to the bench and just as he bent down to press one more passionate kiss on her lips, a tall form

loomed over him in the blackness of the dark night. Marcus and Jane both started to their feet.

"Spy!" muttered the young man through his clenched teeth. "Move on, sir; whoever you may be."

"It is Kester; that mean old fisherman," whispered Jane.

"What is your business here?" thundered Marcus. "Are you deaf and dumb, that you cannot speak? Get out of my path, sir! Let us pass. This young lady is anxious to get home."

"Yer axed me whut my business wus here, yung man; an' I'll answer thet thar question. Fust; my business here is tew hev a reckonin' with you."

"A reckoning with me," sneered young Chesterfield. "Do I owe you anything, sir?"

"Yes, yer dew—yer sartinly dew."

"It is false, sir! I never had any dealings with you in my life."

"But a man as hes dealin's with another man's wife an' darter, hes dealin's with ther man hisself."

"You have no wife or daughter, you falsifier—you outcast of a fisherman! Is it not well known to everyone in this town, that you were never married?"

"But I will be married before ther sun sets termorrer night, ef thar is a justice in this town as hes a right ter perform ther ceramony, an' a license can be hed; an' I know it kin be, an' yer know it kin be, an' ef ther justice can't tie ther knot one o' ther ministers kin."

"Well, what has that to do with me, either pro or con?"

"Pro means, I take it, before; an' con, after; thet is, I hev hearn so; but I'm not a larned man, maybe it don't hev eny sich meanin', but whuther it do or it don't, we'll jest understand it thet thar way. Pro is now, I take it; an' con is termorrer night at this time—an' termorrer night at this time I shell hev a wife an' a darter."

"But what is all this to me? you blasted idiot!"

"Blarsted, am I? Ijeot, am I? Whut is it all tew you? Wall, it ought ter be a great deal ter yer. Wall, now, I am er Yankee, whut cum frum Yarmuth, in old Massachewsets, an' I'll answer yer question by axin' anuther:

Whut is thet thar gal, by yer side, tew you—thet thar gal as yer hev ben a walkin' with on this ere lonely beach—thet thar gal as yer hev a ben a kissin' on in ther darkness—whut is thet thar gal tew you?" and Mr. Nathaniel Kester's voice took on the sound of a sea-lion's—a sea-lion being robbed of its whelps.

"What is this young lady to me? Have I not a right to walk on the beach with any young lady I choose, providing she is willing to walk with me?"

"No!" thundered Kester. "Yer hev no sich right. I am a blarsted ijeot, but blarsted ijeot as I am, I know right frum wrong, which is mor'n yer pear ter understan'; answer me, now, anuther question. Hes a man a right ter dew wrong? No circumvolvalatin' about, answer yes or no. Hev yer, or any other man a right ter dew wrong?"

"I contend that I am doing no wrong," replied Marcus. "I have a right to walk with any young lady I choose, providing she is willing. I also have a right to kiss her, if I choose, providing she is willing; and there is nothing wrong about that."

"I am a old ijeot, as yer say; but ther law says it is wrong fer a man ter hev tew wives at ther same time, in course, we leave ther mormens out o' ther question; perhaps yer a mormen then? I never axed whuther yer ware or no; air ye a mormen?"

"No, sir; I am not."

"Ye air a American citizen, an' not a mormen; then yer hev no right ter marry two wimen. Now ther question I want ter ax yer, is this: which one o' them two wimen air ye a goin' ter marry, Isabel Morton, or Jane Erie?"

"It is none of your business, old man."

"Then I'll make it my business, and arter this night I'll make it ther business o' my life. Yer'll ruin no darter o' mine ef her father kin help it. I'll lay ye low, yer scoundrel, ef this strong right arm hes ther power ter dew it! Come, Jane; take my arm an' let's go home ter yer mother—ter thet purty turkle-dove as is a settin' thar, in thet thar great arm chair, a waitin' fur her husban' an' her darter."

"What are you talking of, you abominable old man!"

exclaimed Jane. "My mother has no husband. By what right do you call me Jane? you vulgar creature! Take your arm? No, indeed, not I. Are you crazy, to talk about marrying my mother? How dare you? My mother, who was once a lady, marry an old, ignorant fisherman like yourself? I would much rather see her in her coffin—moreover, how dare you meddle with me or my affairs? Do you think yourself more capable of looking after me than I am of taking care of myself? Begone! and leave us. This young man is my promised husband. We are affianced. I have a right to be here with him, if I choose. He has a right to kiss me, if he pleases. Take yourself out of my path, sir. What right have you to interfere between me and my future husband?"

"Hes he broken troth with Isabel Morton, then?" asked the old man.

"What business is that of yours, old man? Go and ask her if you want to know."

"Jane," said the old fisherman, "I ask yer pardin, ef I hev offended yer; but yer marm is promised ter me—we are fianced me an' her as is a settin' thar a waitin' fur me now; an' as yer will be my darter termorrer, I wants ter pertect yer, an' pervide fur yer, like as if yer ware my own child. I don't want ter see them purty little fingers a pricked up by thet thar needle eny more; nor them bright eyes spiled a sewin' on shirts. I wud like ter hev my little gal—my little darter—made comfortable an' happy; but ef as yer say, ye air ther promised wife o' thet air millioner, then I hev no more ter say, ef he's broke with tother gal, an' ef he means ter keep his promise ter yer; but I will see thet tother gal an' find out fur sartin, or my name's not Nathaniel Kester. But come, now; come this time, Jane, thet's a good little gal, come home ter yer marm. I sed as how I'd brung yer. She's grieved like, an' frightened, ter hev yer out so late."

Jane's haughty face softened somewhat at the mention of her mother's grief and fright.

"Marcus," she said, quite gently, "I think I must go in now. It really is late. You need not wait to accompany me old man," she continued, turning to the fisher-

man; "I am fully able to walk alone, and need none of your assistance. Good night, dear Marcus. Kiss me, my betrothed," and she turned her face upward toward his. He kissed her in a perfunctory manner and she skipped rapidly away into the darkness.

"Now go about your business, you spying old rascal!" exclaimed Marcus; "and if I ever catch you at it again, I will have you arrested as a midnight assassin—one of the fraternity of sand-baggers," and the young man turned on his heel and walked away.

Nathan clenched his powerful fist and looked at it in the darkness.

"Ef I wus ter strike him with thet thar," he muttered to himself, "he wud be a layin' here at my feet, dead! I must be keerful thet this hand commits no murder. Hold yer rowers, Nathan—hold yer rowers, an' don't yer strike," then turning, he walked down toward the boat.

CHAPTER XXI.

MORTON HOUSE.

"I axed thet thar pardner o' mine, ter stay by Molly 'till I cum. Guess he's eanamost tired out by this time. Bless me, ther town clock is a strikin' ten a ready."

He found Mark awaiting his return. "Thar, boy," said Nathan, "yer kin go now. I wus gone longer-n I meant ter be; an' I guess as how yer may take Molly an' go out alone termorrer. Ye kin hev all yer make termorrer, lad, fur yer old dad is a goin' ter git spliced. Guess as how ye kin take ther boat fur ther rest o' ther week, fur when two turkle doves begins a cooin' ter each other, they must hev a little time to theirselves, yer see."

"Why, Uncle Kester; are you really in earnest? Is it possible you are to marry? You have not intimated it to me before now. Who is to be the happy bride?"

"Ther bestest little woman in all this wide world—thet little turkle dove up thar, as hes a eaglet fur a darter—a black-eyed, soarin' eaglet, as picks a man's eyes out quicker 'n a wink."

"Do you mean Mrs. Erie?" asked Mark.

"Yes, I dew—ther sweet, purty dove!"

Mark shook the old fisherman's hand with a beaming face. "I am very glad," he said. "You will both be a great deal happier and more comfortable. She needs a husband and you need a wife. Nothing could be better. Dad, dear old dad! I wish you joy!"

"Wall," said Nathan, pensively; "I hev got a son—ther bestest yung feller as ever lived—an' I shell hev a darter termorrer. Frum a lonely old man, as hes nobudy belongin' ter him, I shell soon hev a fambly—but thet thar eaglet—it's hard ter tame one o' them birds."

"You refer to Miss Erie, do you not, Uncle Kester?"

"Yes; thet thar gal—thet thar young eaglet what's jest a berginin' ter fly. Ther nest o' ther turkle dove won't hold her much longer I'm a thinkin'. Pray God her half fledged wings may not be siled or broken;" and the old man wiped a tear from his eye with the sleeve

of his coat. "Good night, lad. I telled my turkle dove as how I shud cum back ter her for a little. No one will molest Molly here, arter this time o' night;" and the two men parted, Mark going to the hotel, and Nathan toward the little, lonely, black cottage, not far away.

Jane had reached the house some time since, and entered her room as she had left it, without passing through the living room where her mother was still sitting in the arm chair as Mr. Kester had left her. The mother's quick ear caught the sounds as her daughter moved about. Peace and love were in her heart. She would not risk a scene with Jane, just now.

Presently the latch lifted and the tall form of the old fisherman filled the doorway. He hung his hat and coat up as formerly, then taking his love, who would be his wife tomorrow, in his arms, he kissed her fondly.

"Is it all right with Jane?" she asked.

At that moment the young lady herself opened the door and stood with flashing eyes, confronting them.

"Mother," said she, "I wish to inform you that I am the promised wife of Marcus Chesterfield, that we have pledged our troth to each other." She held up her hand and a very beautiful, valuable, diamond ring sparkled on one of the fingers of that hand. "He gave me this ring wherewith to seal our betrothal this night. I thought there were to be no witnesses but the senseless and shifting sands, but I was mistaken. That man witnessed the betrothal kiss. You, my mother, behold the ring. It is enough. A kiss is a small thing to exchange for a ring of betrothment with a millionaire, especially to a girl who has never known anything but poverty and distress. Never fear for me, mother. It is not an easy matter to bring down an eagle. Remember, mother, an eagle is a bird of prey. I have been called an eagle so many times that I rather like the comparison."

When she had delivered this speech, she closed her door and locked it. The mother gave a sigh of relief, but Nathaniel Kester clenched his fist; and then gave himself up to his present enjoyment with the woman who would be his wife on the morrow; and it was midnight before he returned to Molly and sleep.

Midnight found Marcus Chesterfield, together with his friends, luxuriously eating, drinking and gambling, and Jane Erie was to him almost as though she did not exist. As on former occasions, he staggered to bed at daylight and did not rise until two or three o'clock in the afternoon. This night he had lost ten dollars at cards. Not much to speak of, to be sure, but Alstain had ten dollars more in his pocket.

* * * * *

Great preparations were going on at the Morton house, for the entertainment of Marcus Chesterfield and his friends. Mrs. Morton desired to show the young millionaire that she was well qualified to superintend the establishment, even of a prince, if necessary; and when the dinner hour arrived, the Morton house was as brilliant as a house of that size could possibly be. Every gas jet throughout the establishment was ablaze; every piece of silver owned by that lady was polished to the last degree of brightness. The oldest and daintiest china was brought forth from the recesses of innumerable cupboards. The dinner should consist of ten courses, at least, and more if necessary. The small markets of the town were searched for the tenderest and choicest of meats. Fruits of all kinds were sought. Fish and game of the most expensive kinds were purchased. A hamper of claret was ordered and a dozen of champagne. The ice cream freezer was brought into requisition, and Mrs. Morton was obliged to send to the hotel for dainties unobtainable in the town at the markets. Mrs. Morton was a lady of refined tastes and by the time Marcus and his friends arrived, the house looked like the dwelling of gods or fairies—and Isabel, sweet Isabel, charming, dainty Isabel.

How proud the mother was of her beautiful darling, dressed in the palest of blue silk, heavily trimmed with the finest and costliest of lace, her fluffy hair drawn to the top of her head where it rested like a crown, with numerous curling tendrils escaping everywhere. She wore no jewelry except the sparkling diamond ring that Marcus had given her as a pledge that next New Year's eve she would be his bride. A large bunch of sweet violets rested on her bosom and a few drooped from

the golden tendrils of her hair. Her eyes and the violets were of the same color; the delicate lace covered her neck and arms, for she was too modest to allow them to remain uncovered.

The guests had not yet arrived and she sat at the piano playing a plaintive air, wherein the murmur of the sea could be heard; and, listening, one could imagine the broad, calm Pacific, with the waves beating out the pulsating undertone of its melody—the broad Pacific, so calm and yet so restless—so boundless and irresistible—so vast and deep—so strong and mighty and yet all broken into little flirts and fluffs, like the girl herself.

Mrs. Morton bustled about, looking after the servants as they put the finishing touches to the table. When all was done she entered the small parlor where Isabel was seated at the piano. Mrs. Morton wore a dress of garnet silk, heavily trimmed with black lace. Truly, she was superb—not over forty years of age, with a full, matronly figure. Her shining dark brown hair was dressed similar to that of her daughter's; her large, brown eyes flashed with gratified pride, and she carried herself with haughty grace; but, unlike her daughter, she was bedecked with jewels—jewels that she had kept through all her struggling life—since her father and husband had given them to her in her youth. Diamonds glistened in her hair, on her arms, neck and bosom; and she wore a number of valuable rings on her plump fingers. She did not cover her arms and neck as her daughter did, but allowed them to remain bare, that their plump whiteness might be made more manifest by the rich garnet and black of her dress.

CHAPTER XXII.

BANQUETING AT THE MORTON HOUSE.

The door opened and the servant announced—"Mr. Marcus Chesterfield, Mr. Albert Alstain, Mr. Joseph MacMerry."

We must here pause to state that the Mac was left off from his name; but when his name was announced, or he had occasion to write or sign his name, it was then given in full.

When polite greetings were over and the gentlemen had an opportunity to look about them a little, they were charmed.

Alstain thought Mrs. Morton the handsomest woman he had ever met in his life, and vowed to himself that he would lay siege to her heart. Merry looked at Isabel somewhat as one might look at an angel. He was awe-stricken in her presence, for she was surrounded by a subtle aura that no man might enter whose aura was not correspondingly pure—all others and, thus far, all men were kept at a distance outside this invisible aura—invisible to the eye, but keenly felt by a sense which as yet these impure men did not understand. Perhaps, my readers, you may understand it better. It is now called the sixth sense.

Three other persons, boarders in the house, now entered the room—the old gentleman before mentioned, and two ladies; one, tall, lank and elderly; the other, her niece, a very diminutive young lady, so small, indeed, that she made one think of a large doll, and her beauty was precisely like that of a doll. Her motions were stiff, like those of a doll, and yet, like that image, she seemed to be loose in all her joints. Her flaxen hair fluffed out all around her head, being simply confined by a small band of pearls. Her eyes were large, of a light blue color, and she had a trick of moving them about precisely as a doll's are moved about—mechanically. Her pink and white complexion glistened, and her face was as expressionless as that of a sphinx. She wore a shin-

ing pink silk, cut low in the neck, with short sleeves; a string of pearl beads encircled her neck, and a long, white mantle, of cashmere, streamed out behind her when she walked, partly filling with air like the half of an inflated balloon.

Her aunt was dressed in a black silk and was a genteel relic of fifty years agone.

They were announced as Miss Irena Black and her niece, Miss Mabel Vaughn.

The before-mentioned old gentleman gave his arm to Miss Vaughn. Mr. Alstain gave his to Mrs. Morton. Merry bowed to Isabel, and she just rested the tips of her fingers on his coat-sleeve; while her affianced, Marcus, was left to take Miss Black; and soon they were all seated about the festive board. All well understood that this dinner was given in honor of the betrothal of Isabel Morton and Marcus Chesterfield, the millionaire; and, consequently, it was very proper that it should be a grand affair. No one understood this better than Marcus himself; and yet, as we know, he had placed another betrothal ring, exactly like the one which was on Isabel Morton's finger, on the finger of Jane Erie, only last night.

Do you, my reader, say that he was forced, or inveigled into this act by the wily Jane?

In a measure he was; but one wrong act leads directly to another. If he had been firm and true to his first vows, he would not have met, or walked, or made passionate proposals to Miss Erie. She simply took advantage of his weak, wavering nature, to bind him to herself.

Mrs. Morton desired that he should become the husband of the fair Isabel, simply because he was rich, and not for any virtues which he might possess. Jane Erie desired him for a husband, for the same reason.

Dinner went on merrily, and Alstain's eyes gloated over Mrs. Morton's voluptuous beauty. The old gentleman had already fallen in love with the wax doll, while Merry cast timid glances at Isabel; but, to be on familiar terms with her, he fancied, would be impossible—as impossible as to come in close contact with heaven and its angels while encumbered with the flesh.

Isabel, occasionally, glanced at her betrothed, sitting there so glum by the side of the black, stiff, nearly silent figure of Miss Black. She seemed to rise up grim by his side, like an ominous, threatening shadow. His face was sallow and pale. Dark circles were beneath his eyes. His hair glistened damp and thick above his pale forehead. His hand trembled slightly. His eyes glittered glassily, for late hours and dissipation were making havoc with his nerves. Every time Isabel glanced at him she was obliged to suppress an involuntary sigh. Her pure, healthy nature recoiled like a sensitive plant from contact with him, or, even, the sight of him.

Each one at the table looked at him through spectacles belonging exclusively to themselves.

Mrs. Morton thought he looked extremely genteel and distinguished and that his manners were those of a perfect gentleman. Those marks of weakness and dissipation, simply meant to her the difference between gentility and vulgarity, or in other words, a rich man and one who was in poverty or obliged to work for his living; and Mrs. Morton's opinions do not stand alone in this world of ours.

Isabel, in her youth and inexperience, did not know that Marcus was weak and dissipated; but not fully comprehending this with her mind, the sixth sense, which some call intuition, was more active on that account, and she, without reasoning it out, intuitively knew all this, or in other words, felt it.

I would like here to call the reader's attention to one fact. This sensitive aura, which surrounds most people, is a sure safeguard, if they will but listen to its warning voice; it is more truthful than the eyes, the ears, the taste or the smell, or actual contact, which is called feeling. This aura really does feel, and communicates its discoveries to the sensorium more readily than the sight or hearing, smell or touch; it is fine, subtle, spiritual, and it is utterly impossible to deceive it.

The doll looked at Marcus with round, innocent eyes, and secretly hoped that young Merry was worth a million and would love her passionately forever.

Alstain looked at Marcus as lawful prey that he expected to fleece, to the fullest extent, of all he was

worth, if he could possibly do it; and he would cudgel his brains, day and night, to discover how he might accomplish it.

Young Merry looked at Marcus as a jolly, generous, hale fellow, well met, who was rich and could do as he pleased with his money, and he meant to enjoy it with him as long as he could.

The old man thought him a gay Lothario, and sighed to think himself old and consequently not able to do likewise.

Miss Black thought all ways but one led down to destruction, hell, and the devil, and that one way led straight through the doors of the good old orthodox church. She had not yet learned whether the young millionaire belonged to the accepted church or not, consequently felt a little uncertain about him.

"So you intend to start for the mines tomorrow," said the old gentleman, addressing himself to young Chesterfield.

"Yes, we leave here tomorrow morning for the mines. I wish it were possible for the ladies to go with us, but the country is exceedingly rough and mountainous, and ladies would find it very tedious, besides it is cold there —the snow is quite deep. There is a small town, situated very near the mines, which contains a comfortable hotel, else I, really, could not think of going myself at this season of the year."

"Do you think of selling the mines?" questioned the old gentleman.

"If possible. That is what takes me there now. I am informed, by my superintendent, that an English syndicate wishes to purchase them, and that my presence there is absolutely imperative."

Mrs. Morton's eyes sparkled.

"How much has the syndicate offered for them?" she asked.

"Three millions; but I will not take less than five. If I were willing to sell them for three, I could remain where I am and my superintendent would transact all the business for me; but I think that two millions are worth looking after. The mines are valued at five millions, and I mean to have what they are worth."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LAW GOVERNING TRUE MARRIAGE.

Mrs. Morton arched her head and looked with haughty eyes upon the assembled company, then they rested upon the beautiful Isabel, her daughter, who would be the mistress of all this wealth—no, she herself would be the mistress of the wealth, but Isabel would be the means through which it would be acquired.

Mrs. Morton's heart beat high, but Isabel appeared cold and impassive. Her ideal world did not circle around Marcus Chesterfield and he could only think of women as panderers to his love of vice, his selfishness; women who would flatter his vanity and give themselves up as slaves to his will, to be cast aside whenever he should tire of them, as one casts aside a toy and he would cast them aside with as little compunction.

But what kind of an ideal world was it which surrounded Isabel? Ah; it was a pure and beautiful world. Isabel's world was like a garden in spring, wherein the most beautiful flowers were budding, violets being in full bloom, together with a few other early, sweet, modest flowers. She did not yet comprehend herself, but her nature turned, involuntarily, toward all that was sweet, pure, beautiful and holy.

Thus far, of course, her young life had been entirely subject to her mother. She had been a sweet and dutiful daughter, but time and heavenly sunlight, would eventually burst the garden of her soul into beautiful and fragrant bloom, and she was not one to allow any noxious weed to grow or thrive within it. She was no more fitted to become the mate of Marcus Chesterfield than a sweet rose-bud to mate with an ill odored, poisonous weed, whose poison would enter its heart and destroy it. Her virgin soul had never yet been touched by love, still, within the souls of all maidens there is mirrored a faint outline of the other self—the other half to which it must be united in order to complete the one perfect whole.

I am well aware that some of our would-be-wise men and women take exception to the idea that one half must find the other real half of itself before they are really and truly a perfect whole. They cry out, "free love" and all sorts of bad names; but, did that ever change an eternal truth? Would these wise ones think it better that this beautiful girl should be united to this reckless, selfish, dissipated young man, whose very presence was repulsive to her—whose nature could not meet hers at any point without discord and recoil?

But I hear some of these wise ones say, "If they were to marry they should each strive to bear with the other's faults—bear and forbear—that is our motto. Love should not be free, else we shall be called free lovers." These people would unite the lion and the lamb, and then ask them to lie down peacefully together and bear and forbear with each other's faults. The lamb might look with fearful, innocent eyes at the lion and consequently keep very quiet; but we think that the lion would, most assuredly, destroy the lamb, given time and opportunity. Such marriages are sacrificial. One must surely be sacrificed to the other. True marriage should not be a sacrifice on either side, but it should be the blending of two halves into one harmonious whole; and, unless this other half exists, there could be no perfect marriages.

We contend that every human being has a true counterpart of itself and that it can never be entirely happy with any other. The world may not be ready to receive this truth, but like all truths it has begun to dawn upon the world, not yet thoroughly understood or comprehended. Instead of combating and striving to suppress the light of a grand truth, as some of our would-be-wise ones do, why not strive to grasp and understand it?

These very ones who strive to combat a great fundamental truth, think they are trying to make the world better; but, in our opinion, they have the cart before the horse. They think they are making the world better; their intentions are good. Then why not give others the credit of good intentions also? Mrs. Morton thought she was right. She believed that she was urging her daughter to marry just as she ought to marry. She did not take the soul into consideration; and no matter what

misery her daughter might have endured after marriage, she would have said, like some of these other wise ones, "Oh, they should bear and forbear," but the misery and forbearance would have been all one one side. Why not try to find out the great law of harmonious marriage and then teach it to our young men and maidens that their unions may be happy and joyful and their children beautiful and good? We shall now try to show our readers the soul, or interior being, the spiritual being of two separate halves that had not yet met—who were not yet at all acquainted with each other.

The virgin soul of Isabel Morton had often dreamed of love. Within the depths of her being she saw mirrored the form of the other half of herself—young, fresh, noble, manly. The eyes of this ideal often seemed to look into hers, clear, truthful, and innocent as her own. He was of medium height, well formed, strong and full of manly grace. This ideal would never stoop to a mean, dishonorable or degrading act of any kind. He appeared to her to have talents of various kinds—a man who would constantly reach upward toward the highest possible attainments. She could not picture him to herself as a rich man, but as one who would attain to wealth through earnest endeavors, for, she reasoned well, that one already rich would have no incentive to exert himself, and she could neither love nor respect a supine man. She would take a being, like the foregoing, by the hand and walk by his side his equal, sharing with him through weal or woe, riches or poverty. She did not desire to be a pet or a toy, but the other half—the female half—or, in other words, the negative of her own positive—the right positive and negative joined as one. She could not, in her mind, separate herself and this positive other self into two beings, but as though two forms blended into one being.

When she looked at Marcus Chesterfield, a strange mist crept into her eyes. His face and form looked like this mirrored image, and yet it was not he. No; her ideal bore no marks of dissipation about him. She really did not know that young Chesterfield was dissipated, but she felt it with this sixth sense of hers. Her ideal's face looked bright and fresh, the eyes clear and truth-

ful, whereas young Chesterfield's was sallow, his eyes wore a shifting, uneasy expression, and the grandeur and nobility of noble, strong, innocent manhood, were wanting.

She could not understand the puzzle—why his form, features and general make-up were so much like those of the pictured image within her soul. If she had then known all that the reader knows, she would not now have been the betrothed wife of Marcus Chesterfield. Our young men and maidens need teaching on the all important subject of matrimony. It is the one great event in the life of either man or woman, and ought not to be entered into rashly. It is the great event which peoples the world; and yet, there is no law of life so little understood as the marriage law, that is, the true law of marriage as it exists within the soul of man and woman.

Most young ladies marry for almost any reason but the right one; most of them do not wish to marry unless the young man is in good circumstances, or rich, and a money consideration never had anything to do with the true law of marriage. Some marry because of passional attraction; the young lady, perhaps, is very beautiful, the young gentleman does not ask himself, "Will this young lady prove to be a match for my inner being—my soul?" neither does the young lady stop to ask, "Does this young gentleman fulfil, in all respects, the measure of my soul's ideal?" No; but he says, "Oh, how beautiful she is!" knowing nothing of her mind, whether it is beautiful or not; and she says, "I wonder if he will give me a lovely home and then allow me to do as I please?"

After marriage they find that they do not think alike in anything; their inner natures are as far apart as the poles. After a short time they take no pleasure in each other's society. The young lady is, perhaps, vain and frivolous; the young man, oftener than otherwise, more or less given to vice and dissipation. Her beauty becomes stale in his eyes, and as he no longer pets her, or flatters her vanity, she repines and becomes fretful. They now find they do not think alike on any subject; this leads to their becoming contradictory; they are con-

tinually bickering and contradicting each other. At last, they quarrel outright, and in a year or two, at most, they quarrel continually and violently; next comes the divorce.

Now how much better to understand the true law which governs marriage, than such a state of things as exists at the present, but we hope, in this story, to show how the young should marry. We like to show the inner law controlling true marriage.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MYSTERIOUS SPECTRE.

The dinner at the Morton House passed off with great eclat, and after dinner music and cards. At first they played simply for amusement, then Alstain proposed that they play for small stakes. "It was so much more exciting, giving zest to the games, and as the stakes were so small, no one would be greatly injured thereby."

Miss Black and her niece, together with the old gentleman, now retired to their several apartments. Mr. MacMerry, Mr. Alstain and Marcus Chesterfield were the only ones left, except Mrs. Morton and Isabel.

Mrs. Morton was not at all averse to small gambling, but Isabel looked upon it with great disfavor and would not join in the game; she sat apart in a drooping and pensive attitude, and shortly after, asked to be excused and retired to her own room. The party below stairs played on, regardless of time. It was three o'clock in the morning before they broke up and took their departure; and another ten dollars had found its way into Alstain's pocket—transferred from the young millionaire's thence—and a large quantity of champagne had disappeared. In the meantime, Isabel, on going to her room, drooped more dejectedly than ever, and as she laid her weary head on her pillow she thought: "I do not love Marcus Chesterfield. I could not love any man who cared to gamble, no matter for how small a sum. What a quantity of wine and champagne he drank! Why, if he were to continue to drink, as he did this evening, he would soon become a sot. I begged mother not to have wine or champagne with the dinner; but she would not listen to me. She said she could not think of giving a dinner so meanly—that Marcus was accustomed to the best—and what would he think to be invited to a dinner without wine, especially one given by her in honor of our betrothal? I feel that if I am ever weak enough to yield to her wishes, and marry Marcus Chesterfield, that my life will be most wretched in spite of his millions.

Oh! I would much rather marry a poor man who had his way to make in the world; a man whom I could love and honor above all others; a man who tonight would have refused to drink wine; a man who would have refused to play cards at all or, if he consented to play one or two games for amusement, he would not, on any account, have gambled, even for the smallest sum. Oh, we can never be happy! We do not think alike. He did not seem to care much for my music, and music is the breath of my soul. He tells me that he could never concentrate his mind, or his energies enough to become even a passable player; and I admire strength of will and purpose in a man. I cannot discover that he has any particular talent, and I am sure that his soul is poverty stricken. I would much rather a young man would be poor in pocket and rich in soul, or spiritual power.

"My betrothed husband is in the house, and yet I feel more lonely and desolate, by far, than if he were not. Certainly a girl ought not to feel this way toward a man whom she expects to marry—to whom she is affianced." And the girl fell asleep with a sigh and a tear.

* * * * *

After her guests had left the house, Mrs. Morton retired to her chamber. She had sipped considerable champagne, herself, and felt a little giddy in consequence; so, when she had donned a flowing white wrapper, she threw herself into her large arm chair and gazed dreamily into the fire. Her lofty ambitions were in a fair way to meet with fulfilment, so she thought.

"My future son-in-law enjoyed himself well tonight," she mused. "He can now see what a grand mother-in-law I shall be to him. How very foolish for young men to think a mother-in-law in the way. Really, I do not know what he would do without me. Isabel seems to take so little interest in her own welfare—and, how interested that friend of his seemed to be in me. Really, he said the most flattering things to me. It makes me feel almost like a girl once more. It would be strange, would it not, if he should want to marry me? I am not so old, after all—only forty—but, unless his wealth can

match that of my daughter's affianced, I certainly could not marry him. I should much prefer being at the head of Isabel's princely establishment unless he should prove to be a millionaire also. I could never think seriously of him otherwise. I must ask Marcus about him.

"How pleased young Merry seemed with Miss Vaughn. Perhaps he is a rich man too, for certainly Marcus would not associate with any other. Miss Black can leave her niece next to nothing. How important, then, that Miss Vaughn should marry a wealthy man. Well, if it turns out as I think it may, they will have me to thank, and being guests at the Morton House will prove to them to have been a golden nest. I feel vexed with Isabel for refusing to play, and she would not taste champagne, either; and to think of her leaving our guests so early in the evening. To be sure, she pleaded headache, nevertheless I doubted the headache very much.

"Well, she is pledged to Marcus, that is one comfort, and I understand her well enough to know that she will not break her promise lightly, consequently, I have nothing to fear."—"Indeed, madam! Have you not?"

A voice had sounded in her ear—a voice had apparently spoken these words—but the voice was far away and seemed to be borne to her ears with the boom of the restless waves that were dashing with resistless perseverance against the beach. The softened roar of the ocean could always be heard at the Morton House, and again,—"Indeed, madam! Have you not? Have you taken me into consideration, proud mother—me, Jane Erie?" The voice sounded nearer. It was in the room, and there—O! mysterious, dreadful thing!—there stood that spectral form she had seen once before. She could have met the real Jane without fear; she could have taunted and insulted her if need be, but this spectral thing was altogether different; and yet, after all, this spectre was the real and the other but the dissolving shadow—this spectre was the real Jane, while her body was the covering which would be, sooner or later, cast aside.

"Madam," said the voice once more, "look!" and the spectre held up her hand. "Look at this ring; the very counterpart of the one your daughter wears. Marcus

Chesterfield has pledged his troth to me, and I will hold him to his vow though the world were rent asunder! I will hold him to his vow, though the nether world and all its legions of satanic imps were marshaled against me. I know what you would say, old lady. That Isabel's betrothal was first, consequently would be valid; but I will prove that the last promise of a man is the true and valid one, showing, as it certainly does, that he became weary of his first choice and therefore sought a mate more congenial to him.

"Madam; I shall win. Be sure of that," and the spectre vanished with a hollow, mocking laugh.

"O! Great God!" sighed Mrs. Morton. "What mystery is this? Twice that creature has appeared before me. It is, simply, witchcraft. She is a witch, and ought to be burnt or gibbeted. The Bible says a witch ought not to be allowed to live. But I will cast this visionary thing out of my mind; and, let Jane Erie beware how she crosses my path, or she shall yet taste my revenge! I am inclined to think this spectral form is something more than mere fancy on my part."

CHAPTER XXV.

OFF TO THE MINES.

The next day Marcus Chesterfield and his two friends started for the mines. But it is not our intention to go to the mines with them. We prefer to stay at Redondo and watch the progress of Mark Chester and the family of Nathaniel Kester, the old Yankee fisherman; and we also desire to keep an eye on Mrs. Morton and Isabel.

It was very uncertain how long Marcus Chesterfield might find it necessary to remain at the mining camp. On this day, also, the old fisherman took to himself a wife.

Mrs. Erie expected that Jane would be bitterly opposed to her marriage; but, contrary to all expectations, she seemed rather pleased than otherwise, and treated the old man with greater respect than she had ever done before.

The cottage was painted a soft dove color; the acre of ground belonging to it was fenced in; trees were set out; a pretty trellis was erected over the door and porch; roses were planted; the front yard was sown with grass seed for a lawn. Uncle Kester had money enough to pay for the cottage, and make all necessary improvements. Mrs. Erie grew plump and comely with happiness and contentment. Many pretty and convenient things were added to the furnishing of the house, and the old fisherman looked more like a civilized being than he did when he made the boat and sands of the shore his home. Mrs. Kester had her horse and buggy, and Jane shared many a pleasant drive with her mother.

During much of this time Mark had been alone on the fishing grounds. He had worked like a beaver and had made considerable money; but, when everything was settled satisfactorily at home, the old man returned to his boat and to his employment of fishing for "yaller-tails."

Thus, four rather uneventful weeks passed by. Mark went out in the boat regularly each morning and returned each evening with a fine lot of fish. He still ate

his dinner on the beach and took his breakfast at the hotel. On bright moonlight nights he often walked about the town and some distance beyond it—out where the fields were lying asleep in the moonlight. He particularly noticed one large field of about a hundred acres—a beautiful level tract of land—which gave evidence of having been, in former seasons, sown with wheat or barley. He noticed a sign near the entrance to the field, and on going to it he read by the moonlight: "This Field To Let." Every time he strolled out in this way, he passed the Morton house, and, involuntarily, his eyes sought the window where he had, on one occasion, noticed the desponding figure of that young girl, whom he now knew to be Isabel Morton. The house was always alight, and looked attractive and cheerful.

He had, by this time, become acquainted with much that was transpiring around him. He knew that Isabel Morton was betrothed to Marcus Chesterfield. The old fisherman had also told him Jane's story; but he had never yet met Isabel Morton face to face. He knew she was a very beautiful girl from the glimpse he had of her on the evening of his arrival at the hotel. He also knew that she was not happy, and, strange as it may seem, he could not keep his mind from dwelling upon her. He spent the larger part of his evenings writing, and his book grew apace. He said in his heart that he would write a good book—one that should influence those who read it to become better men and women—and his hero should be the highest ideal that dwelt within his soul. He would look within and behold the mirrored image of one whom he could love and adore—the highest type of his ideal of womanhood.

We have already described Isabel Morton to the reader, and the description of Mark Chester's ideal tallied exactly with that of Isabel Morton; and, of course, his hero was a poverty-stricken young man who meant to, and should, accomplish great things. He should be as handsome as Apollo and as strong as Hercules, and he should become a millionaire through his own efforts and lay his wealth at the feet of his beautiful ideal love.

He thought if he were indeed to become rich, he would like to place his money in such a way as would benefit

mankind in general. He did not know, as yet, just how he should spend his money—much would depend on his future love—for he felt sure he should find her, some time.

It was now the first day of February and Mark counted up his earnings for the month, or that portion of his earnings which he had been able to save, and he had precisely two hundred dollars.

"Not so bad," he thought. "Two hundred dollars, if put to the best possible use, may bring me large returns; but, whatever use I put them to, they shall, in some way, benefit the poor man who has, perhaps, a family depending on him for support. But for this kindhearted old fisherman, I, myself, might now be tramping the streets of Redondo or Los Angeles, without employment and homeless. I will find a way to benefit other men as he has benefited me."

That night, in his dreams, he seemed to be walking in the large field before mentioned; and, as he walked along, gazing at the ground, he discovered that it was scattered over with golden coins, and he picked up, one after another, five dollar gold pieces, ten dollar gold pieces, twenty dollar gold pieces, until his pockets could hold no more and both hands were filled. In his dream, then, he sat down on a hillock and counted his treasure: just three thousand dollars. He awoke with a start.

What could the dream portend.

As he looked toward the foot of the bed, he discerned a shining mist. Soon it took form, or, rather, a form appeared in the centre of it, the misty light surrounding it like a halo, and, as he gazed, he recognized the form of his own dear mother. She smiled lovingly upon him and stretched forth her beautiful arms as though to embrace him; her lips moved; a soft voice issued from them.

"My son, my dear boy! It is I, your mother. Listen to me. Because you desire to benefit your fellows, your wishes shall be granted. Hire that field. All shall be well."

The form melted slowly away and with a happy heart Mark fell asleep. Once more he dreamed of the field, but this time every inch of its surface was covered with

waving grain. The spirit of his loving mother had given him a clue. O, how happy it made him to think that she could still watch over him, help him, and show him what he ought to do, not only to benefit himself, but others.

The next day while he and the old fisherman were rocking on the waves, Mark said:

"Uncle Kester, I would like, in some way, to make more money than I can at this work." Then he related his dream, and told his foster father how he saw the spirit form of his own dear mother, and what she said to him.

Now the old fisherman was not one of those men who pooh-pooh at youth and its dreams; for he knew, full well, that but for the hopefulness and ambition of youth and its feeling of certainty of success, very little would be accomplished in this world, and he fully believed that Mark's mother had appeared to him, to help him, for had not his own Molly watched over him ever since she left him, all so broken-hearted and lonely, on old Yarmouth beach?

"Wall, now, lad; I'll tell yer jest what I think it all means. Yer see, with good management, yer kin make a heap o' money outen thet thar field. Now, sonny, let's reckon a bit. Yer kin hire thet thar field for two dollars an acre; an' yer say there's a hunderd acres in it. Ther rainy season is jest a comin' on, an' we hev hed a number of purty good showers a' ready. It's time thet thar field wus plowed an' sowed this minit. Now ef thar's a hunderd acres in thet thar field, yer kin hire it fur two hunderd dollars, an' yer hev got jest thet an' no more nor no less. Now yer go an' see thet thar man, es hes thet thar field to rent, this very evenin', arter yer git through here, an' yer'll git ther field, sure; an' yer say ter him, now I'll gin yer one hunderd dollars down, an' a nuther hunderd when I sell my crop. Now yer'll want about a hunderd sacks o' barley ter sow it with, an' it 'll cost yer sumwhar in the naborhood of a dollar a sack. I think yer'd better take a day off termorrer—yer shan't lose anything, fur we share an' share alike—an' I didn't lose nuthin' ther day I got married ter thet thar sweet

little womern up thar at ther nest, es I calls it, fur it is a purty nest now, ain't it?"

"It certainly is, Uncle Kester."

"Wall, then, es I wus a sayin', yer take a day off termorrer, an' hire yer field, an' go an' buy thet thar hunderd sacks o' barley, an' yer pay down fifty dollars an' pay ther rest arter yer reap; then yer jest go over thar, ter thet thar settlement, whar them poor men an' ther famblies be, an' jest set um a wurk in yer field a plowin' an' a sowin' of it. Sow it down ter barly hay, my boy; then yer jest keep rite on a fishin' with me, an' make all ther money yer kin. Yer 'll still hev fifty dollars so thet yer kin pay yer men at nite, an' they kin cum rite here on ther beach an' git it, while ye air a eatin' o' yer bite an' sup.

"Ther season, so fur, hes ben so wet an' rainy thet yer'll git a good crop. Now let's reckon, my lad. Thar's one hundred acres. Yer'll git on a average three tons per acre; thet'll make three hundred ton o' good barley hay; thet kind o' hay is a bringin' ten dollars a ton now, an' it wunt be no cheaper'n thet. Yer'll make three thousan' dollars clean cash. Now it wunt cost yer no more'n one thousan' dollars fur laber, an' pay yer men well, tew; then yer'll be airnin' money here all on ther time—an' wunt a thousan' dollars make ther harts o' them thar—an' ther famblies—glad? Yer bet it will!

"Now, lad, when everything's paid, yer'll hev two thousan' dollars clean gain, besides all thet yer kin airn here a fishin', an' thet's what yer angel marm meant fur ter tell yer, an' thet's what yer dream pinted at. Now yer'll hev thet thar land fur a year, fur two dollars a acre, an' arter yer barley's cut, yer kin plant it ter Yankee beans—an' ther lord knows how many beans yer'll git—fur I can't tell yer; an' yer jest keep them men outen thar ter wurk, an' put bread inter ther starvin' mouths o' them thar childern."

"Oh, Uncle Kester! How good—how very good you are to tell me all this, for I am a stranger to this part of the world, and without your advice should not know how to manage. Why did you not do something of this kind yourself?"

"Wall, it's jest this ere way, yer see. I wus born in

one o' them thar fishin' smacks thet lay at anchor off old Yarmuth banks, an' I hev ben a rocked on ther cradle er ther deep ever sence. Ther sea, an' Molly, an' them thar yaller-tails hes more atracshins fur me then ther fields er ther barley dew. I'd git humsick, es sure es yer live, an' when I hed no pardner it wus about all I cud dew ter ketch them thar fish an' clean um, an' sell um; but they say, in union thar's strength, an now thet you an' I air pardners, we hev more strength—an' visy versy, I gess."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THEY MEET AT LAST.

Mark followed the old man's advice; and when the poor men at the settlement of shanties and tents, heard that their labor was required in the field, they thronged the beach at night, after the old fisherman and Mark had landed. But Mr. Kester and Mark were very careful to employ those who needed the work, instead of those who could earn money in some other way.

Mark had, of course, already hired the field, and now he hired ploughing and sowing machines, together with the horses to run them; his barley was purchased, and in two weeks more his field was as green as possible, and really presented a beautiful sight. Not many weeks thereafter, the great field was a waving mass of thick barley, completely headed out.

Every night, when there was a moon, Mark visited his field; and often the old fisherman went with him, that he might see that the work was perfectly done.

The seasons in Southern California are about two months earlier than in more northern climes. It was now March, and the whole country was green and beautiful. Roses and calla-lilies were plentiful everywhere. The whole country was a vast garden of beauty. The mountains and hills were clothed with verdure. Many of the houses and cottages were nearly hidden from sight by flowers and fragrant vines. The vast groves of orange trees were filled with sweet blossoms. The apricot trees were all clothed in white like a bridal array. The peach trees were covered with pink blossoms. Immense barley fields waved their tasseled heads of grain in the fragrant breeze. The sky wept and laughed by turns, and on Sundays, when Mark remained on shore, he thought that Paradise could not be more beautiful.

The meadow larks were singing, the mocking birds had just commenced their roundelays, and everything was glad; for the rains had been plentiful this season, which is not always the case in this fair land.

Mark Chester was as busy as he could be, and consequently as happy as falls to the lot of mortal man. Mr. and Mrs. Kester were very busy and happy also.

Now that Marcus Chesterfield was away, Isabel Morton breathed more freely. She became cheerful and happy; tripped around the house and garden like the beautiful fairy that she was. But Mark Chester and Isabel Morton were destined to meet. It would be a remarkable incident if they did not, in a town of such small dimensions as Redondo.

Isabel Morton knew how to sing. She had a fine voice and consequently made one of the choir in the principal church of Redondo.

Mark Chester was also a fine singer, having a deep bass voice. The leader of the church choir boarded at the hotel. Mark and this gentleman became acquainted, and the choir leader soon discovered that Mark knew how to sing; he therefore invited him to join the church choir which Mark did, for he had not the slightest intention of becoming a recluse—he intended to be at oneness with the world and make of himself all that he could possibly be; he meant, also, to be a power in the world if he could; but, at the same time, he would endeavor to put whatever talents he might possess to the best use he could toward helping all mankind. He wanted to leave the world better for having lived in it. He knew how to sing and had a good voice; he would help to make the world happier by giving forth the best music he was capable of, and so one Sunday in April, the choir had a new member, and the new member was as handsome as a man could well be—a fine, robust, yet genteel looking young man.

When Isabel Morton glanced at the new comer her heart gave a bound. Surely he must be Marcus Chesterfield's twin brother! In form and feature they were almost exactly alike; but, oh, how different the expression —how different the coloring!

All the members of the choir were on the qui vive to know who the young man was. Some there were in the choir who did know, and it was soon whispered about that he was only a young fisherman whom old Nathaniel Kester had taken under his wing as a sort of protege;

really, a fisherman was of very little account, and he was entirely out of place in this aristocratic choir, which was made up from some of the very best young people of Redondo; so many noses were elevated in the air, and many a contemptuous and supercilious glance was cast in his direction.

Mark was not unaware of this, but his heart was innocent, good, brave and true, and he must meet the world and conquer it; which he firmly intended to do. He had received a very good musical education in London, previous to his mother's departure for the unseen world, and this fact the ladies of the choir were not long in discovering, and as it was hard to get good bass singers, especially those who knew how to sing, the choir leader was only too glad to keep Mark in the place he had assigned him.

The young man's eyes would stray to Isabel Morton's face in spite of himself; and whenever their eyes met, as they often did, her face would flush the color of the rose and her sweet eyes would droop beneath his glance like modest violets. A subtle, unseen power drew these young souls together—a power which they did not comprehend—at least, not at that time.

This was Mark's first Sunday, and after the evening services were over, and he found himself alone in his own room, he said:

"I have seen the heroine of my novel. I have found my soul's ideal, and already know who she is. She is Isabel Morton, the betrothed of another, and that other, one not worthy to touch her hand. She is the sweetest and most beautiful girl I ever saw. Can it be possible that she loves Marcus Chesterfield, or do his millions bear a charm for her?"

As he asked himself this question, the despairing attitude of the young girl, as she sat by her window on that night when he passed the Morton House for the first time, rose up before him.

"No, I am convinced that she does not love him.. Her pure, sweet nature could not find its mate in Marcus Chesterfield."

One evening in the week the choir would meet for a rehearsal. It usually met at the Morton House, that

being the best and most convenient place; and now Mark was to enter the home of the woman he already loved. This fact alone was a joy to him, and he was impatient for the time to arrive.

At last the much wished for evening came round, and he found himself in the beautiful home of his beloved.

Mark was really very proficient in music, and played the organ and piano better than most young men of his age. He had at one time thought of becoming a music teacher, but concluded that he would prefer to be free from the cares of teaching; moreover, most of the music teachers whom he had met were in poverty. He felt that he wanted more room, a larger scope in life, and he did not think that his talent justified him in giving up his life to the profession of music. He did not believe that he would ever become very great as a player, and if he could not be great, he would leave it to others who could; and therein we think he showed good judgment; but he was more gifted than the ordinary choir singer, and his playing, if not that of a master, was far above that of the average village performer.

He was now introduced to Mrs. Morton and her daughter Isabel. How his heart thrilled when he took the young girl's hand in his after the rehearsal was over.

The young people remained to engage in an amateur musicale. They sang glees and madrigals and many beautiful songs; very few of the singers, however, were masters of the piano keyboard, Isabel being the best player among them. One or two others could play a little.

When it was known that the young fisherman could play, he was asked to favor them. Mark perceived a slight sneer on one or two faces present, but, nothing daunted, he seated himself at the instrument, determined to do his best—and his best proved to be very good indeed—so good that all applauded, even those who had sneered before. He was really the very best player among them, for Isabel lacked his firm, manly strength and power, consequently her technique was not as good, her playing not as brilliant. To be sure her touch was soft and sympathetic, but Mark rose a little above

mediocrity; and, after hearing him sing and play, the young people forgot he was only a fisherman.

Mark returned to his room that night happier than he had been before since being left alone in London by the death of his mother, whom he had so dearly loved.

And how was it with Isabel?

Mark was the fulfilment of her dreams—her day dreams. She had dreamed of just such a noble, frank countenance; of just such a strong, supple, manly figure; of just such clear, open eyes that seemed to look the world square in the face—eyes that denoted courage and yet were pitiful and soft at the mention, or sight of suffering; and when he sat at the piano so erect, with such a grand and noble air, as though he were, the master of whatever he might take in hand, her heart went out toward him as it never had to any other.

The meeting of Mark Chester and Isabel was but the commencement of the end.

Mrs. Morton had received, perhaps, a half dozen letters from Marcus Chesterfield, always directed to herself, with another inclosed for Isabel; but his epistles were extremely cold and commonplace. To be sure, there was some love-making in those for Isabel, but it was of a perfunctory kind and fell flat, without stirring a ripple in the heart of the girl; but Mrs. Morton was perfectly satisfied with those which were meant for her, for in them he spoke of very little except business. He greatly feared he might not be able to return to Redondo for six months, at least. The syndicate would not buy his mines at five millions until there had been much more extensive tunneling than there had been so far. The representative of the syndicate intended to remain at the hotel, at the mining camp, and he thought it best to remain there also, as he greatly desired to watch the proceedings from day to day. The mines, thus far, were turning out excellently, and he felt sure that he should yet get his price for them; so Mrs. Morton continued to build air castles for herself and Isabel, but Isabel's castles were not at all like her mother's.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EAGLET HAS FLOWN ITS NEST.

Summer came on apace. The Morton House was filled to overflowing with travelers, tourists, and others who desired to spend the summer at this fine beach. Every day, when the Santa Rosa steamed up to the wharf, she disgorged a long procession of travelers and sight seers; and many would remain for good, for nothing could be more attractive than southern California at this time of year.

Mr. Kester's fishes were in great demand at the hotels, and prices were raised until Mark and the old fisherman received nearly double the former price of the fish. The reapers and binding machines were now hard at work in Mark's field, and when the hay was all piled in bales, they found the field had yielded an unusual amount, for the season had been excellent and the rain copious.

Mark received three thousand dollars in cash for his hay, and the bales were soon removed to the storing-sheds of those who had purchased them. The men were again set to work ploughing the field, and it was soon planted with a small, thrifty, bush-bean; the beans would be ready to harvest before August. Mark had paid out about one thousand dollars for labor—for he paid his workmen more than they could obtain anywhere else—and he found the field had already cleared him two thousand dollars, while he had not earned less than two hundred a month at fishing.

When the first of July came he had received twelve hundred dollars for fish, and his living expenses had been about two hundred dollars. He now found himself possessed of three thousand dollars clear cash. This he placed in the Redondo savings bank. It was soon noised about that young Chester had a bank account of three thousand dollars. Men began to take off their hats to him. Ladies smiled upon him. Mothers, with marriageable daughters, were exceedingly polite to him. Beggars

began to beset him. Swindlers made efforts to entrap him. Everybody had something or other they desired to sell to him. The hotel proprietor and the clerk were very pleasant and suave to him. Scarcely a day passed that he did not receive an invitation to some social gathering, musicale, or dancing party. Almost everyone seemed to forget that he was "only a nasty fisherman" —that is to say, they had thus called him before he had a bank account of three thousand dollars. To be sure three thousand dollars was no very great amount. There were hundreds in Redondo who were possessed of very many thousands of dollars; but the people now began to see that he was no ordinary young man; moreover, he had finished his novel or story, and the opening chapters had already appeared in a Chicago paper—a weekly paper devoted to free thought and the great truths embodied in the new, or, rather, old religion, called Spiritualism. This grand weekly paper was called "The Progressive Thinker" and it was rightly named, for more progressive ideas were never before printed in any one paper.

Mark had subscribed for this paper shortly after he had become established at Redondo; and many happy hours he had spent in the perusal of it. He loved truth for truth's sake. He did not care to become popular at the expense of that which he conceived to be true, and he knew that his own dear mother was not dead; he knew that she still loved him; was with him much of the time, and guarded and guided him; knowing this, he could not have committed a wrong act, even if he had been disposed to.

Men of letters began to notice him, and the noble and learned editor of the Progressive Thinker wrote him kind and friendly letters, speaking well of his story—and Uncle Kester was as happy as man could well be.

"I knowed ther boy wus all right," he often said to his "purty dove," "es soon es I clapped my two eyes on him. Human natur can't deceive old Kister much; he's lived tew long in this ere tarnel world. Thet boy—thet thar pardner o' mine—'ll make his mark in the world, sure's yer live, Miss Kister! I wish our Jane tuck a fancy ter him instid o' thet tother feller, thet thar mil-

lioner. Wouldn't it be mighty curous tho', ef Mark shud become a millioner tew? Don't believe it wud make a bit o 'difference with him tho'. He'd jest es lief go out a catchin' yaller-tails es ef he hadn't a cent,—but, marm, whar is thet gal? I haint a seed hur sence mornin'."

"I really do not know," replied Mrs. Kester. "She went out quite early this morning, and has not yet returned."

"An' thet thar millioner hes ben a writin' tew hur a good deal of late, hes n't he tho'?"

"Yes; she has received a great many letters, and there is no one else who would be likely to write to her."

"Wall, marm, perhaps it'll all turn out right arter all, fur Mark hes ben a walkin' with Isabel Morton on this ere beach fur a good many Sundays long back, jest afore ther time fur evenin' meetin', an' I kin tell yer, marm, thet thet thar young feller thinks a tarnel sight o' thet gal."

Evening came, but Jane Erie did not make her appearance. Ten o'clock, still Jane was absent.

"Where can she be?" asked Mrs. Kester, pale with alarm. "If Marcus Chesterfield were here, I might think she was walking on the beach with him. She has never walked on the beach with any other young man, to my knowledge. Some accident may have befallen her, Nathaniel," and the mother's eyes were raised, entreatingly, to those of her husband.

The old fisherman took his pipe from his lips, knocked the ashes out of it against the jamb of the fireplace, thrust the stem of the pipe into its accustomed place, which was a narrow strap of leather tacked up against the wall at the spot most convenient for his hand to reach, rose slowly from his chair—he was beginning to get a little stiff in his knees—then, without uttering a syllable, he went toward the kitchen, took down his hat and coat, and with a very grave face, got himself into them.

His wife watched him with anxious eyes.

"Are you going to look for her, Nathaniel?" she asked.

"Yes, dearie; an' don't yer fret while I am gone. I shell find her ef she is in this ere little town. Don't yer be afeard thet I shell not."

Mrs. Kester arose and went toward him.

"Hark! How the wind is howling!" she said. "Surely, Jane would not stay on the beach in such a gale as this."

"Don't yer be afeared, turkle-dove." And taking his wife in his arms he kissed her as tenderly as a mother kisses her first born.

"Perhaps, now, she's at ther hotel, an' hes ben detained thar by sum o' them wimen folks. I shell find, an' bring her back with me, dearie; never fear."

He opened the door. A heavy gust of wind extinguished the lamp and flared the fire in the grate, wildly.

"Yer hed best go ter bed, an' rest; I shell cum back presently, an' our darter 'll be with me, never fear." He closed the door and started forth into the wild, dark night, in search of the wild, dark bird, that had flown its nest.

Up and down the beach, hither and thither he went, his head thrust forward, intently listening for some footstep, and peering into the thick darkness with half closed eyes. As he passed Molly, that loomed up like a huge black shadow, he saw by the dying embers that Mark had already gone to the hotel; still, he went down to the boat, walked around it with searching eyes; but no human form was visible, no sound could he hear but the rushing wind and the roaring sea—for the waves were now dashing high and furiously against the beach.

"Molly," said he to the boat, "can't yer speak an' tell me whar ter find thet thar gal as is a constant wear an' worry ter her marm? Yer wunt speak; yer es silent es ther tomb! Wall, then, I must leave yer. You an' them big waves, thet's jest a-reachin' o' yer starn, must tussle it out together. Yer safe enough, I reckon; fur Mark hes dug yer ankor knee deep inter ther sand. Thet boy never forgits ner negleks enythin', an' ther last spark o' fire hes gone out, a'ready. Wall; good bye, ole gal, till mornin'. Now, whar shell I go ter look fur thet thar crazy gal? I'll go ter ther hotel fust, I gess, an' see ef she's thar; an' in case I don't find her, I'll jest ax Mark ter go with me in sarch o' her." Saying which, he turned his steps in the direction of the hotel.

But Jane had not been seen at the hotel. The old fisherman then ascended to Mark's room and knocked.

The young man opened the door, but looked a little surprised on seeing who was there.

"Oh! is it you, Uncle Kester? Come in, and take a seat here by the grate. This heavy wind makes the air chilly."

The old man stepped inside the door, but did not sit down.

"What is the matter, uncle?" asked Mark. "You look solemn and troubled. No one sick down there at the cottage, is there, dear old dad?"

"Ef yer mean ter ask ef thet thar sweet turkle-dove is sick, then I shud say she war otherwise—I shud say she ware ill at ease in her mind."

Mark looked at the old man, inquiringly.

"I suppose yer haint seen thet thar gal round about, enywhar, hes yer?"

"What girl do you mean, uncle? Certainly no girl, except the chamber maid, ever comes to this room, and she never comes when I am here," and the young man smiled good humoredly.

"Wall, in course I didn't mean fur ter ax yer ef Jane hed ben in this ere room; but ef yer hed obsarved her a watin' enywhar round on this beach?"

"No, uncle; I have not seen a lady, child, or young girl on the beach today. The wind is altogether too furious for ladies or children to be out."

The old man sighed heavily.

"Mark," he asked, "what do yer suppose hes become o' thet thar gal, es hes hed hur own way mor'n she oughtern tew?"

"Do you mean Miss Erie?" asked Mark.

"Wall, yis. I mean Jane Erie, in course."

"Is she not at home?"

"She's not thar, pardner, thet's sartin; an', what's more, she hes not ben thar sence mornin'."

Mark looked thoughtful.

"I shell jest hev ter sarch this ere town thru, afore I go back ter hur marm—thet poor dove, thet is a mournin' fur hur one nestlin'. 'Pears like tho' es ef thet nestlin' must a ben hatched outen a strang' brood, fur she's more like a eaglet then a dove."

"Your right, dad; and I think the eaglet has flown to

parts unknown; or, perhaps, to yonder mountains. However, I will go with you and we will make a thorough search of the town and beach, together with the little settlement, yonder."

They sallied forth into the wind and darkness, and it was past midnight before they gave up the search.

All was in vain, however. Jane Erie had disappeared as though the earth had swallowed her up or the restless waves of the Pacific had engulfed her.

While her husband was absent, looking for the missing girl, Mrs. Kester searched her daughter's room. She found that Jane's best clothes had also disappeared, and, discovering this, she came to the conclusion that her child had left her home of her own accord, and to search for her in the town was useless; so when the old fisherman returned from his wanderings about the town, she told him of her discovery. He looked downcast and gloomy, while the mother sighed and shed tears of grief and disappointed hopes, for she had hoped, as all other mothers do, that her daughter would have been a staff and comfort to her declining years; she had hoped that her daughter would have married some honest young man, here in Redondo, and that they would have made their home here, near her own, and that lovely little children would have called her grandma. But her nestling had flown—no one at present could tell where.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A BRIDE.

We, also, are interested in this young lady's career, and as we are more fortunate than Mrs. Kester was—by being able to follow, simply because we are invisible—we will take that liberty.

Jane did not take the train that morning, knowing full well that if she were to do so, her presence at the small station would be known; for all connected with that depot were well acquainted with her. She stole, unobserved, out upon the wharf, just before the morning boat, the Corona, started for San Francisco.

Marcus Chesterfield had begged of her, a number of times, in his letters, to meet him at San Francisco; and she had replied that she would do so when he was ready to lead her to the altar. In the next letter which she had received, by return of mail, he pleaded his previous engagement. She replied, that his later engagement was the more binding of the two—that she would come, directly he promised to marry her as soon as she arrived. But he demurred for a considerable length of time. At last he wrote, that it was so stupidly dull at the camp he could endure it no longer. He should start for San Francisco the next day, and that if she would take the next boat from Redondo for San Francisco, he would meet her at the wharf. He also enclosed a five hundred dollar note, that she might not lack for funds. He was an entire stranger in San Francisco, and no one there need to know but that she was a wealthy woman, equal in all respects to himself.

Jane was delighted. This was precisely what she desired and what she had anticipated; so just before the boat was ready to start, she made her way to it. She was heavily veiled, and in the confusion no one recognized her, and soon she was many miles away from her home. She would arrive in San Francisco somewhere about five o'clock on the second day, sleeping one night on the boat.

She had never before been parted from her mother and for the first time found herself entirely alone in the great world. There was not a soul on the boat whom she had ever seen before; she sat gazing toward the fast receding shore; a sense of desolation crept over her.

Suppose Marcus Chesterfield should fail to keep his appointment? She placed very little confidence in his promises, realizing his perfidy toward Isabel Morton, and although she herself had instigated it, still she knew that he was by nature inconstant, and, consequently, not to be trusted.

Jane Erie did not love Marcus Chesterfield in the least. She was one of those women who by nature love little—one of those to whom extreme wealth and honors constituted all there is in life worth the living. To give herself to any man, no matter how wealthy he might be, without the marriage ceremony, would have been to her, also, impossible. She did not wish merely to accept gifts and favors. She desired to be the mistress—without cavil or doubt—of his millions. This she would be or nothing. But, of course, Marcus Chesterfield could not know all this, and he came to the conclusion that if he must marry Jane, it really made little difference to him after all.

He had admired Isabel's beauty and sweetness, but his vanity was hurt at her coldness and reluctance to become his wife at once. He was one of those who are indignant if a woman is not ready to fall at their feet and adore them. Jane Erie could pretend to all this and yet remain cold and indifferent at heart. Marcus was perfectly willing to desert Isabel Morton, but he feared her mother. If he married Jane, would Mrs. Morton induce Isabel to sue for breach of promise of marriage? He could not tell. He greatly feared anything of this nature, for he well knew that if she were to do so, the courts and the lawyers would run away with a vast amount of his wealth; it might possibly ruin him entirely; however, he would meet Jane and listen to whatever advice she might be able to give him.

The following day, after Jane had left Redondo, the Corona arrived at San Francisco. It was about half past five o'clock. The sun had already disappeared be-

hind the hills, but the air was soft and balmy and the sky without a cloud. When the passengers began to land, Jane looked about, eagerly, for her lover—and, truth to tell, he was not long in discovering her.

His elegant carriage was waiting near by. His greeting was not very effusive, still, he shook her hand warmly,—while her eyes glowed with the smouldering fires of ambition.

Ah! could it be possible that she was so soon to be the mistress of vast wealth? She, Jane Erie, not much more than a beggar, who had never known anything but privation and poverty all her life? She, Jane Erie, whom the ladies at the hotel, in Redondo, had been in the habit of snubbing with supercilious mien on all occasions? It would very soon be her turn now, she thought.

Marcus handed her into the carriage, the driver whipped up his horses, and presently the carriage stopped before the Palace Hotel.

Marcus had made very few remarks on the way, and Jane had scarcely lifted her head, but the young man had stolen his arm about her waist, and imprinted one or two passionate kisses on her lips.

Marcus had already engaged a suite of elegant apartments at the hotel, and into them he conducted the girl who soon meant to be his bride. This suite of rooms consisted of parlor, bedroom and bathroom.

Jane took off her wraps and looked about her. She had never seen anything half so elegant in all her life.

Marcus ordered a sumptuous repast, and when they were left to themselves, Jane said:

"Dear Marcus, have you decided where we are to be married?"

"No, not yet," he replied. "Really, there is no hurry, Jane. A week or two hence will do, will it not?"

"No!" she answered, decisively. "Unless we are married, this very evening, I shall leave this hotel and go to another; or, I may take the midnight train for Los Angeles."

"Jane, you can never be guilty of doing anything so foolish!"

"Indeed, I can," she replied. "I not only can, but

will. You wrote me that you had already procured a license, or I should not be here. Now, let me see it."

Marcus took the document from his pocket and handed it to her. She opened it with great deliberation and read it aloud, slowly, and distinctly.

"This is all right," she said in a pleased tone. "It only remains, now, for the marriage ceremony to be performed. Shall we drive to the house of some divine, or will you send for one to come here?"

"But, Jane," he remonstrated, "I had hoped, when we married, to make some display—and, really, your traveling dress is not suitable for the bride of a millionaire."

"I care little whether it be suitable or not," she replied; "still, if you will go out and engage rooms for me, at some other hotel, I am willing to wait until tomorrow, when I will provide myself with suitable wedding apparel—and you can engage the minister for tomorrow evening."

Marcus hesitated.

"After all, Jane," he said, "it really makes but little difference. Your dress is quite neat; I will do as you say. But, there is a minister here at the hotel. I will speak to him. If I ask him to come to us at ten o'clock, it will do, will it not?"

"I think it will," answered Jane; "in the meanwhile, Marcus, we will go out. I wish to make one or two purchases."

Marcus spoke to the minister and then he and Jane went out. The stores were not all closed. Jane purchased an elegant point lace collar, and a pair of white kid gloves; then they returned to the hotel.

The young lady's traveling dress was a steel-gray alpaca, very pretty and becoming. She pinned the collar about her neck, drew on her white kid gloves, and, really, looked a very beautiful bride indeed. The clerical gentleman soon after knocked at the door; and, in less than half an hour, Marcus Chesterfield and Jane Erie were man and wife.

Jane could no longer conceal her joy and gratification. Now, her real life would commence in earnest. She questioned Marcus about the mines.

"They turned out all right," said he. "They gave me

my price, and we need never return to the mining camp, or Redondo, for that matter. The syndicate really exists in London, England. My dealings have been with its representative. I am at this present moment, my dear Jane, worth six millions."

Jane clasped her hands in an ecstasy of joy.

"Marcus," said she, "shall I write to my mother?"

"I think not, just at present. I want to get clear of this cursed country, first; for Mrs. Morton may take it into her head to sue me for breach of promise of marriage to her daughter, or instigate Isabel to do so. We will start for New York tomorrow, and from there set sail for Europe. I do not mean to return to America for ten years at least. Of course you will like this, Jane?"

"Well, perhaps as well as any other. I desire to see the world and also to take my rightful place in it."

In a week from that time, Marcus and Mrs. Chesterfield were on their way to Europe.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JANE IS FORGIVEN.

Time went on, as time is in the habit of doing, bringing and depositing as it flies, incidents without number.

Mrs. Kester had received a letter, dated from New York. Jane had mailed the epistle just before going on board the steamer which was to sail at ten o'clock. She informed her mother that she was married to Marcus Chesterfield, and would be far on her way toward another land by the time this reached her mother's hand.

The undutiful daughter sent her mother a check for five thousand dollars.

"Mother," she went on to say, "I am now the wife of a multi-millionaire, and have succeeded in becoming rich through sheer force of will! Mother, I am ready to fall down and worship that which is called 'Will Power or Force.' This is a spiritual gift, my mother, and if exercised to its fullest extent, can, in the words of the Bible, remove mountains. I do not think that mountains are removed by prayer and faith alone, but by the powerful exercise of the will, together with corresponding actions. I might have spent my whole life on my knees, praying for good fortune, and it never would have come to me, I am sure. I might have sat in that little poverty-stricken room, at home, stitching my life away until the crack of doom, and nothing would ever have come of it but sickness, ruin and decay. Mother, I took my life into my own hands and have raised myself from the depths of poverty to the heights of extreme wealth and grandeur—but I hear you say,—

"'So you have, my child; but through most discreditable and dishonorable means.'

"I know you and the old fisherman think this of me. I could, no doubt, have remained with you, and, in time, married an old—or perhaps, even—a young fisherman. I might, possibly, have married one of those vagabonds in Shantiville—as I always called that little settlement of huts and tents—and then have led him a life not at all

to be desired—in fact, mother, I should have made his life a perfect hell, and he would have looked upon me as a demon in human form; for my natural bent is not that of a self-sacrificing, loving woman. You are that, and may continue to be that, but I am on a different plane: I must either fly or die.

"Now I hear you say: 'But, Jane; how very dishonorable to inveigle into your net the promised husband of another.'

"Mother, there are two ways of looking at this. I am well aware that Marcus and Isabel were promised to each other; but a bad promise is better broken than kept. I do not know whether I could have been wicked enough to have broken Isabel Morton's heart or not; but I well knew that I should not. She did not love Marcus. No, not even as well as I do. I really think, mama, that I love him better than any other woman who lives; however, that is not saying much; but I really love him a thousand times better than Isabel ever did or ever could; consequently, I do not think that I have been as dishonorable as you think.

"Now, mother, whom have I really wronged? I imagine I hear you say,—'Jane, you have wronged me—your mother.'

"Have I really wronged you, mama? You are a weak willed, loving, and self-sacrificing woman. You give yourself to a poverty stricken old fisherman, partly because you really love him, and partly from a feeling of gratitude because he used to give us a fish or so when we were hungry; but, mother, I could never love such a man. He appears to me an ignorant old hulk, as low in the scale, almost, as his old black boat, Molly.

"Bye-the-way, I think I will name my first girl, Molly. I am really in earnest, mama, then, perhaps Mr. Nathaniel Kester may forgive me, in part, for running away and marrying the man I wanted. Now, mother, I send you five thousand dollars, hoping that it may, in part, heal the wounds of yourself and that really honest and good man, your husband. I intend to send you five thousand more as soon as I land on the other side of the water. Ten thousand dollars, together with the little house and acre of land, will make you quite comfortable,

and that dear old step-father of mine won't be obliged to go out fishing.

"Mother, whom have I really wronged? No one. I say, no one, and stick to it. You may say I have caused a scandal. Well, let those talk scandal who like it. I am sure I have not wronged the scandal mongers in the least, but many of those who will gossip about me have wronged me most bitterly. Those gossiping, proud, supercilious dames and damsels belonging to Redondo, used to grind me into the earth. How insulting and patronizing they used to treat me; how haughtily they looked down on me. It is my turn now; but, as wicked as you think me, I am better than the most of them. The only person in the world whom I have really wounded is Mrs. Morton herself.

"Well, mother, it stands just this way. Mrs. Morton's soul and my soul stood up to fight a duel. We fought and I have conquered, that is all. One or the other must conquer. I am less guiltless than Mrs. Morton. She would have sold her daughter into bondage simply that she, herself, might reap the benefit. I consider that her crime would have been far more heinous than the buying and selling of the African slave. What right has a mother to sell her daughter into a bondage worse than slavery or death?

"Isabel has always yielded her will to that of her mother's, and that mother would have sold her child in consequence.

"Isabel has been a more dutiful daughter than I have, but I doubt if her being so would have resulted in the happiness of herself or her mother. I shall be better able to lead Marcus aright than Mrs. Morton could. His faults would have soon brought his mother-in-law down upon him, and with all his wealth, Mrs. Morton and Isabel would have been very unhappy.

"Mother, I can not see that I have been very wicked. You will still love me. The gossips of Redondo will forget to scandalize me in their eagerness to talk of some one else.

"Isabel, no doubt, already thanks me in her heart, but Mrs. Morton will be my enemy for many years to come.

"Good bye, for this time, mama, dear. You shall soon hear from me again.

"Your daughter,
Mrs. Marcus Chesterfield."

Mrs. Kester kissed the letter and laid it away in a little casket containing her treasures, and then drew the five thousand dollars from the Redondo bank.

The old fisherman looked at the money. Tears came to his eyes. Then he whistled softly. Then he kissed his wife and called her a cooing dove.

"Wall, thet thar eagle hes gone an' soared away. Yer can't make doves outer eagles—an' yer can't make eagles outer doves. Lions ner lams wunt lay down tergether, no how yer kin fix it, unless yer put the lam' inside ther lion—an' ther eagle will claw ther dove, sure. Let thet thar eagle hev hur own way. She is a right royal eaglet, she is. Calls me a old hulk, do she? not much better'n Molly—an' ole ignerunt fisherman! Wall, jestice is jestice, an' thet thar gal is right. I am a ole ignerunt hulk es sure es yer live, turkle dove; but, fur all o' thet, Molly, she loved me—an' you love me, turkle-dove—an' Mark Chester loves me—an' all them thar people at ther settlemint, loves me—them Shantyvillers, es ther eaglet calls um—an' a most o' ther peoples here in Redondo, calls me unkle—an' I gess es how ther most er them wuld trust me with ther wimen an' darters—an' may be, wud like ter borrer a dollar er two o' me, occasionally; so, I gess, ther ignerunt ole hulk kin git along, sumhow.

"Natur is kind ter me—jest es kind es tho' I was es wise es Solomun. Jest tew think whut thet thar sea hes dun fur me—an' look at this ere gardin. Did yer ever see anything grow like it, turkle dove? an' them thar roses blow es red an' smell es sweet fur me es fur eny uther man, an' I wudent swap my turkle dove fur ther richest an' beautifulest woman es ever lived.

"Thar air eaglets, an' thar air turkle doves, an' thar air lions, an' thar air lams, an' thar air ole hulks; an' yer can't change one inter tother; but, howsumever, I will take ther gal's muny, an' thank hur tew; fur, turkle dove, I am a gittin' a leetle stiff in ther jints, an ther

rumiticks is a gittin' inter my back an' sholders, an' sumtimes, when I am a rockin' in thet thar boat, an' ther sun's a blazin' away at my ole head, ther same's tho' I war a yunger man, I gits a leetle dizzy, like, 'specially when them yaller-tails refuses ter bite.

"An', marm—ole gal—ten thousan' dollars 'll set us up in good shape, an' no mistake!

"I think we kin afford ter forgive Jane."

"Jane has never been a very bad girl," said Mrs. Kester, "but an exceedingly wilful one."

"Wall, marm; she sez es how it hes ben ther will es hes done it; but, dew yer think, turkle dove, es Jane 'll be happy?"

"I believe she will be happier as Marcus Chesterfield's wife than in any other way," answered Mrs. Kester. "As you say, she has not the heart of a dove. Her pride is more easily wounded than her love; but I think as she does, that Marcus Chesterfield, with all his wealth, would have made Isabel Morton miserable; and, probably, she would have died of a broken heart."

CHAPTER XXX.

MRS. MORTON BATTLES WITH A SPECTRE.

Mrs. Kester sent Mrs. Morton a note in which she said:

"Mrs. Morton:

"Dear Madam. I am exceedingly sorry to inform you that my daughter Jane has married Marcus Chesterfield, and they are, at this time, on their way to Europe. That Mr. Chesterfield has not dealt honorably by your daughter, I am well aware; still, there are many other young men who do not deal honorably with young ladies. I hope you will forgive his error. Of course, my daughter Jane is not guiltless in this matter; but I have already forgiven her.

"I hope, dear madam, you will not take this misfortune very greatly to heart; for, really, after all, it is your daughter, Isabel, who is the wronged party.

"I can only say, madam, that I am very sorry that my daughter could find it in her heart to wrong so sweet and beautiful a girl as Isabel.

"My husband joins me in good will and wishes for you both.

"Yours truly,

"Mrs. Nathaniel Kester."

When Mrs. Morton received this note, and had taken in its contents, she stood, for a moment, like one who had received a mortal blow, and then fell to the floor with a dull thud.

The servants hearing the fall, rushed into the room. room. Isabel, who was standing at the time before the mirror, combing out her long, beautiful hair, also hurried to the spot, still not thinking the noise to be made by her mother.

The servants hastily placed the lady on her bed and then applied restoratives.

Isabel took the missive from the hand of her mother and read it; and, as she read, her countenance beamed

with delight, and nothing but her mother's condition caused her the slightest sorrow. But that mother soon rallied, then went into screaming hysterics.

The doctor was hastily summoned. He ordered quiet and a sedative, and when the lady had recovered her composure she desired to be left alone.

She sat in her room speechless for hours, her eyes filled with a wild, despairing light.

"Oh, could it be possible," she asked herself, "that Jane Erie, whom she had looked upon as little less than a beggar, was the wife of her carefully nurtured, and beautiful Isabel's affianced husband?" O! She could not believe it. She would not believe it. There was his last letter, now, lying on the table. In it he had said that he was soon to be paid his price for the mines—five millions of dollars—and he hoped to return to Redondo before the winter months, that he might be in readiness to lead his promised bride to the altar by New Year's day.

This note which Mrs. Kester had sent her, was an imposition—that was certain. Probably Jane herself had caused it to be sent from a spirit of revenge.

"The spiteful cat!" muttered the lady.

And thus she sat cogitating until the shades of night set in. She would not go down to the dinner, but ordered a cup of tea and some toast instead, for, truly, she could not eat.

After the tea things had been taken away, she lighted the grate, as the evenings were once more becoming a little chilly, and then, as her life forces began to return, her rage knew no bounds. She walked back and forth in her room like some wild animal. Her soul became like that of a ferocious wild tigress, and if Jane Erie had been in the room, in person, Mrs. Morton would, no doubt, have torn her in pieces, if it had been possible to do so.

"The vile huzzy!" she ejaculated. "The miserable, plotting demon! She has long been in league with Satan, I know. A vile imp who could do what she has done, should be hung without judge or jury; she should by lynched and torn in pieces, flayed alive, tortured—oh, there is nothing that would be too bad to do to such

a vile good for nothing, but evil huzzy. If I had her here now, I would wring her neck as I would that of a fowl. Beheading would be too good for her."

"If you had me here now? Well, madam, I am here."

A voice had spoken. Or, was it the rising wind or the moan of the sea? No, it was not; for there she stood—that spectral form which the lady had seen before. She really stood there, her great, flashing eyes fixed on the raging woman.

"Here I am," said the apparition. "Wring my neck, if you can. Much good might it do you. Your thoughts are fixed so intently on me, madam, that my soul is drawn into your presence. Madam, I am the conqueror! You are the conquered. What difference does it make to Eternity which of us is the vanquished party?"

Mrs. Morton stared, foaming with rage, at the vision.

"Spectre, devil, or both," she gurgled, "I will tear you, whatever you are," and she rushed wildly forward with extended hands and clawing fingers.

The spectral form advanced to meet her. The raging woman passed directly through it, half falling against the wall in her mad charge—then, she faced about with glaring eye-balls and, there stood the form the same as before—their positions simply being reversed—a scornful smile curling the lips.

Again Mrs. Morton charged like a mad bull, passing directly through the form, as before; and this she did a half dozen times or more, until her strength was exhausted, then she threw herself into the large chair, panting heavily, with heaving breast.

"Allow me to ask you a question, Mrs. Morton," whispered the spectral form. "Which one of us is the huzzy—which the demon? I am sure I think epithets fit you; however, I am perfectly willing you should have them. I can well afford to be generous, madam, not only in soul, but in material wealth. The six millions are mine, Mrs. Morton, instead of yours. We tilted for them, you see, and my soul or will power being the stronger, I broke your lance, that is all.

"What do you care for Marcus Chesterfield, except as an adjunct to his money? I have not tilted with your daughter, madam. I scarcely would have dared to cross

lances with her. Her purity and innocence would have appalled my soul and rendered me cowardly. She is good. I am not. She does not love Marcus Chesterfield—neither himself nor his money. I love him as much as I am capable of loving anyone, and his money far better than himself.

"Madam, it is you whom I have fought and conquered. I am now Mrs. Marcus Chesterfield, and, if I can help it, you shall never meet my husband again. This is the last time I shall trouble you. I have thrown you aside as I would an old rag; so, good-bye!" and the spectre was gone.

Mrs. Morton did not leave her room again for a number of weeks; and when at last she once more appeared before her household, it was with a sorrowful and subdued air. She never mentioned to anyone having battled with a vision.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SPIRITUAL RAPPINGS.

The next day the old fisherman went out, as usual, with Mark Chester in the boat. The old man was unusually silent and thoughtful all day.

They caught an immense load of fish, and when the boat was hauled up on the beach, Nathaniel said:

"I think es how, pardner, I shell hev tew stay an' help yer; so jist yer make coffee fur two, an' fry a double lot o' fish. I am jest about starved, fur sartin."

Mark lighted a fire, made the coffee for two, and broiled the fish, very glad, indeed, to have the old man keep him company. But Mr. Kester had a double motive for staying tonight under any circumstances, for he wished to talk with Mark about Jane. The young man, as yet, had heard nothing, and had not the remotest idea where she could be. The old man gulped down his first cup of coffee.

"Fill 'er up agin, Mark," said he. "I telled turkle dove, up thar, ter go tew bed an' not tew set up fur me, es I shud stay an hour or tew with you, es she knowed I hed sumwhat tew say ter ye.

"Marm hed a letter, she hes."

"A letter?" asked Mark, elevating his brows as he gave the old man an inquiring look.

"Yis. She's hed a letter frum thet thar gal o' hern, an' I'll be durned, pardner, ef thet thar jade haint gone an' got married."

"Married!" exclaimed the young man. "Married? To whom?"

"Wall, now, I don't beleve yer cud gess frum now till doomsday."

"I do not know about that," said Mark with a wise, but still curious look. "But, of course, dad, you do not object to tell me?"

"Not I," answered Nathaniel. "She's jest run away an' got spliced ter thet thar cussed millioner, whose name is somewhat like yourn, my boy."

"Do you mean Marcus Chesterfield?"

"Wall, shiver my old timbers ef I don't."

Mark's countenance lighted up with joy.

"Then, Miss Isabel Morton is free!" he exclaimed. O! indeed, uncle, you have made me very happy, or, rather, Jane has."

"Wall, I jest knowed es much aforehand. Yer dead in love with thet thar gal, ain't yer, now?"

"I love her better than my own life," answered the young man solemnly, but with shining countenance—"and, now, uncle, I must tell you of something that happened to me last night. I was sitting by my fire, as usual. I had been writing in my book—for you must know, daddy, that I am writing another novel—and in my book, my hero was situated in his love affair, just about as I am—or, rather, was, until you told me that Isabel was free. I did not know just how to get him out of his difficulty, so threw down my pen and sat gazing at the fire rather dejectedly, when that particular electrical chill ran through my frame, and I became conscious that my mother's spirit was bending over me. You know that I can always feel her long and beautiful hair sweeping about my head and face at such times. I turned my face up toward her rapturously.

" 'Mother,' I said, 'you have told me, since you went to the spirit world, that the human will was all powerful if properly exercised; but I cannot hope to marry the woman I love, for she belongs to another, and it would be dishonorable for me to supplant him.'

" 'My son—my darling son,' she softly whispered to my inner consciousness. 'Isabel Morton is already free. You will marry the woman you love;' and now, tonight, you corroborate that which she had already told me. O, indeed, indeed, I am a happy man!"

"Wall," said the old fisherman, "ther wurld do progress, thet's a fact; an' I am powerful sorry thet I didn't know about ther human will afore—say, when I war a yung man—'cause I mite hev hed a edacation an' larned all about grammer, an' so on; an' then, thet thar gal wudn't a hed a reson fur callin' me a ignerent old hulk o' a fisherman."

"Did she call you that, Uncle Kester?"

"She did, my boy, an' she telled ther truth, she did. I ain't a goin' ter blame no man—ner woman nether—fur tellin' ther truth."

"She certainly is very thankless and unfeeling."

"Wall, she may not be quite es carful o' my feelin's es you be, Mark; but, fur all o' thet, she is not thankless, fur she sent turkle dove a check on thet thar bank fur five thousan' dollars, an' she's a goin' fur ter send five thousan' more."

Mark opened his eyes in astonishment; and yet, after all, was it any more than she ought to have done?

"Really, uncle, if she were to give Mrs. Kester half a million, she would do nothing more than what would be right. But, nevertheless, uncle, I am very glad, indeed, that you and your wife have come into such good fortune."

"Wall, now, boy, so am I, an' I am glad thet I wus alers good tew thet thar gal. Sum step-fathers mitn't hev treated her well."

"Uncle, one word more before you go."

The old man had risen to depart.

"I desire to marry Isabel Morton, and I also desire to be worth a million dollars. Do you believe that by exercising my will power to the utmost, I shall be able to accomplish, or bring to pass, that which I desire so much?"

"Perhaps so, boy—perhaps so. This is an age o' steam, this is a age o' electricity, an' they bottle up sound, an' when they git ready they let it off a whizzing, an' I'll be durned ef I didn't go inter a show the other nite, right here in Redonder—in this ere little town o' Redonder—an' see a bull fite, an' a lot er men a mowin', an' a murder er tew, an' a woman a washin' of a black boy ter make him white; an' ther betenist thing o' all wus a train o' keers—ther 'lightnin' express,' they called it—an' thet thar train o' keers wus a cumin' rite down onter me an marm, es sure es yer live; rite thar in thet thar hall, an' we a settin' in our seats. I jumped up an' yelled with all my mite: 'Stop them thar keers—stop um! What in thunder air ye a doin'?' Turkle dove she pulled et my coat, an' ther people all laffed an' cried: 'Down in front—down in front! Put him out—put him out!' I didn't keer a fig fur all ther yellin', but when marm

pulled et my coat an' sed, smilin' an' soft like, 'Nathaniel, it's only a pictur', I sot down an', Jerusalem-jewhiteker! ef thet thar train o' keers warn't out o' sight in a jiffy, an' a gal wus a dancin' an' a whirl-a-gigin' about like mad, an' she wus a mity purty gal, tew. Now I say, yung feller, thet this is a curus age, an' ef they kin make picturs run like ther litenin' express, an' fite like Spanish bulls, an' dance jest like a surcus gal, an' ride hosses, an' so furth—picturs, I say, thet kin dew all this—I gess yer hev steam enuf inside o' yer—er will power, es yer call it—pears to me it's all one an' ther same—I gess yer kin do a most enything yer like."

"Well, uncle, I will tell you what I should like."

"Oh, I know what yer'd like, an' what a most eny uther man erd like. Yer'd like ter be rich, now, wudern't yer?"

"Yes: I desire to be rich—very rich, indeed; but I desire riches for a particular purpose. Not for my own selfish gratification, but that I may benefit mankind in general, and the very poor in particular. I am thinking continually of plans whereby I might benefit poor men and their families. Uncle, I have made considerable money this year, but the amount of money I could make in these various ways would not be sufficient to do much. I am sure, if I were worth a million or so—say, for instance, as much as Marcus Chesterfield is, I could work for the world to some purpose."

"Wall, lad, thar is only one way about these parts thet a man kin git very rich; an' thet way pears ter be all luck an' chance. Ther biggist rascal as ever lived, stands jest es good a chance es a 'onest man. Thar air sum big mineral deposits in them thar mountins, over thar, an' ef yer cud disciver a big gold mine in them hills yender, an' cud sell it ter sum o' them New Yorkers, yet mite be rich in no time."

"Then you think, uncle, that is my only chance here?"

"It's yer only chance o' gitin' teribul rich."

"But the trouble is in knowing just how to find one of those rich mines. I might prospect for a life time and not be successful."

"Thet's jest what I sed, young man. It's all luck an' chance."

"Perhaps not. This is an age, as you have already said, when hidden forces are being brought to light. I believe, dad, that there are hidden forces which can be brought to bear in finding gold mines."

"Wall, now, I hev hed sum sich thots myself, specially arter I seen them thar picturs es cud dew eanamost enything thet livin' foks kin dew."

"Sit down, uncle, and let us talk this matter over a bit—moreover, I have something I want to tell you about.

"You know that I have written one novel, and that I am now writing another. My first story has already been published, and received considerable commendation."

"An' dew yer expect ter airn a million dollars a 'ritin' o' novils?"

"No, uncle. I do not expect to earn a penny at the business of story writing; quite the contrary. I give my time, talent, postage stamps and paper gratis. I even am obliged to buy my own ink; but this is not the point; it is something else I wish to tell you of. While I sit at my little table writing, I hear peculiar sounds, raps or knockings."

"Dew tell, now! Why, boy, them thar sounds must be spiritual rappins!"

"I think you are right, uncle. At first I thought the sounds were accidental; but I soon discovered they were not, for I noticed that when I was writing anything particularly good—especially anything pertaining to the welfare of humanity—they would be loud and distinct. To make sure that it was not the creaking or snapping of the table, caused by the motion of my hands and arms in the act of writing, I leaned back in my chair, simply allowing my hands to rest lightly on the table; then the raps would come, sounding very much like the ticking of the electric telegraph. At last I began to ask questions, and I soon found that I was talking with intelligent beings. The answers to my questions soon informed me that my mother's love for me was so great that she, being in constant rapport with me and, consequently, knowing or reading my mind, had interested a number of great, grand, and good spirits in me and that which I wished to accomplish; they have also informed me, in

this manner, that they are unceasingly and untiringly working for the enlightenment and uplifting of the whole world, and that it is only through unseen forces that this can be done. They desire that all war shall cease; they desire that all men shall be brothers; they desire that there shall be no exceedingly rich men and that there shall be no poverty stricken ones; they desire that no one human being shall prey upon another; they desire that men and women shall be equal; they desire that men shall be as pure as they expect women to be, or as society in general expects them to be; they desire that all monopolies shall be expelled from the earth, especially land monopolies, for give the poor man land, which he really should receive free, and poverty would cease to be. Now, all this was told me by the clickings or rappings on my own little table as I sat alone, and they told me what you have already said, that there exist many large and valuable gold mines in the Sierra Madre range of mountains. They also told me that they would lead, or guide, me to some of the richest of them and that the desire of my heart should be gratified; but that after I had become possessed of the now hidden wealth, if I did not use it for the benefit of humanity, it should be taken from me in various ways instigated by them; for they who are high in the spheres of spiritual life will assist no one in obtaining wealth at the expense of his poorer brother man."

"An' how kin they show yer whar these mines air?" asked the old fisherman.

"My mother has promised to show me in a dream. She says that by opening up these hidden treasures the world's riches will be augmented, but they should never be shown to anyone who will not work for the good of the world. The earth holds concealed within her bosom untold wealth, vast resources, and those who will work for the good of all, for the good of truth, for the good of right principles, for the downfall of error, will be aided to obtain this wealth that truth and justice may prevail. That is all I have to tell you, uncle, but I soon expect to be guided to these mines by this band of spirits that my loving mother has brought to me—the band of powerful invisibles—quietly in my room."

"Wall, boy; what hes thet thar tew dew with your a gittin' o' thet thar million o' money?"

"Very, very much to do with it, uncle, as you will soon discover. I want this money to help bring about the state of things I mention. All the theorizing and writing in the world will never bring these things to pass. It must be done by practical persons who have money or means to do with. A man without means is already beneath the wheels of the car of monopoly. He is helpless. He can do nothing. It is rich men—men of large resources—who must become interested in these great truths.

"Take, for instance, a dozen or more multi-millionaires, and let them desire nothing so much as to benefit struggling humanity, and see the millions of human beings they could make happy and content. But how is it now? These millionaires grow richer and richer by robbing the poor man of his hard earned money. Otherwise they could not grow so immensely wealthy.

"Now I desire money that I may do good with it, and I desire to obtain it in such a way that it shall make no man poorer in consequence. I do not wish to rob, in any way, any human being; but in whatever manner I may obtain wealth, I desire that the means by, or through which I obtain it, shall be a benefit to the poor man."

"Yis, lad, I understand. Wall; why didn't yer ax them thar sperits ter help ye?"

"That is precisely what I did do."

"Wall, it's one o' ther beaten'ist things I ever hearn tell on. It is better'n them thar livin' picturs; it's better'n them yaller-tails; but, arter all, I don't know bout thet."

"Well," said Mark, smiling, "the sea first supplied my wants—the land has given me a surplus—the mountains shall give me wealth—and the sea, the land, and the mountains, can all be taken in at one sweeping glance. I can easily travel from the sea to the mountains between sunrise and sunset and rest a couple of hours in the heat of the day besides.

"Good night, daddy. Kiss that turtle dove of yours for me, for is she not my mother by adoption, and Jane my sister?"

"She is yer marm, fur sartin, boy, an' thet curus, wilful gal's yer sister, an' no mistake. Good-night, lad. God bless yer, an' all them thar sperits help yer. Gess, lad, es how I will go with yer ter them thar mountins, an' I'll let thet thar poor feller es broke his leg, hev Molly—an' thet reminds me es how I, tew, hed a curus dream. I thot es how Molly cum an' telled me thet I shud be rich fur sartin, an' thet when it all cum ter pass I should let thet poor feller an his wife hev my boat ter git a livin' with, es he cudn't wurk on ther land, owin' ter his lameness.

"Good night! Good night!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

A DREAM, YET NOT A DREAM.

Mark loved Isabel Morton, as the reader already knows; and, before going to the mountains, he determined to have an interview with her and plead his suit, for he had reason to think that she was not indifferent to him. She was now free from her former bonds. Still, he had a secret misgiving that Mrs. Morton would not favor his suit; yet he knew, intuitively, that it had been Marcus Chesterfield's millions that had gained that lady's favor more than his personality.

He would like to have the mother's full consent as well as the daughter's. He hoped that if he married Isabel, they, together, might make that lady happy. He well knew that it ought not to require a million dollars for that purpose, yet the mother's consent and happiness entered largely into his calculations, and was another secret incentive for him to strive to obtain the amount of money he desired. He had not been able, thus far, to see Isabel alone at her own home, but he was determined to ask her for a private interview when he should meet her at the next rehearsal—and this he did. While they lingered a little behind the others, he took her hand in his. It trembled within his grasp. This gave him hope.

It was ten o'clock in the evening, but it was nearly as light as day, for the moon was full.

"I greatly fear, Mr. Chester," she said, "that it will not be possible for us to converse alone at my home, but I will sit a moment with you on yonder bench. The evening is exceedingly beautiful, and it is almost as light as day."

Mark's heart gave a bound. The bench toward which she pointed was the very one where he had sat the night of his arrival at Redondo.

They lingered, walking slowly behind the others, and then stole quietly down upon the beach and seated them-

selves on the fateful bench—fateful on account of its solitude, as some people are on account of their solitude.

Mark in a straightforward and manly way told Isabel of his great love for her, asking her to become his wife. He then told her everything concerning himself, and his life, even to the minutest detail, for Mark Chester had no secret sins to conceal. He told her what his present means were, and how he hoped to find wealth in the mines; he also told her how he had been influenced in that direction.

The young girl told him, with many blushes, that she loved him in return, that she believed she must have loved him from the first time they met, but she did not think her mother would consent to their union, at least, not at present. She then solemnly promised to wed no other, and when he returned from his quest, she would be his wife, even if her mother was not willing; but, she added:

"I think my mother would consent to our union if you were to be successful; for my own part, I would marry you if you had not a farthing. We would strive together, dear, and amass enough to make us comfortable. We could gain a competence, I am sure."

Mark was also sure of it, but as he told her, he wanted to do good for the world at large.

"Something of that kind has been the dream of my life, as well," she replied, "but, until we met, I did not know how it could ever be accomplished."

"The dreams of one's life are never fulfilled until those who are intended for each other, by nature, are wedded," he said; "and, you and I, darling Isabel, are the true counterparts of each other."

Mark returned to his room that night happier than he had ever been before in the whole course of his life. Isabel, the woman whom he loved, had promised to be his wife—the only woman, as he believed, he should ever love. He desired to love all the world, but only one as the other half of his own being.

Isabel, when she returned to her own room that night, laid her head on her pillow, a sweet smile hovering about her lips and happy contentment in her heart. Mark fulfilled her girlish dreams. She desired to marry

for love—and love alone. Her womanly instincts were not at fault. Her heart desired a man, pure, noble, and good—an unselfish man—but, not unmindful of self, however, a man who would be mindful of self enough to provide well for his own household, a man broad and noble enough, when he had accomplished this, to work for the rest of humanity; a capable man, so capable that he not only would be able to provide well for his own household, but to help elevate others. She believed Mark to be a man of this character; and, as the reader has already been made acquainted with the young man, he can readily see that she was not doomed to disappointment.

When Mark laid his head on his pillow, he prayed earnestly to his mother to come to him:

"Mother—dear mother, I desire wealth that I may use it to benefit the world, and you have promised to aid me. Now, dearest mother, in my dreams tonight, show me the spot in the mountains where I shall be able to locate my mines to the best advantage. Bring to me this powerful band of spirits, who desire to use me as an instrument toward helping the world in general, and show me the place."

He then fell asleep, believing that his prayers would be answered, and he was not disappointed.

That night it seemed to him that he left his body and went out into the starlight. It seemed to him that he was floating, or hovering in the atmosphere, some ten or, perhaps, twenty feet above the solid ground; the beautiful form of his spirit mother by his side, her large, soft eyes gazing into his so lovingly. Her angelic hand was clasped in his, supporting and sustaining him. Her robes—gossamer in texture—were floating backward as she moved along, showing the graceful outlines of her superb form; the dark masses of her unbound hair flowing about her like a veil, her beautiful features emanating a halo of light, love for her boy gloriously shining forth upon him.

"My son, my darling boy!" she said in silvery tones. "I have heard your prayer and am here to answer it. You desire riches to do good with, consequently, the angels will help you; and they are willing to help all

who desire wealth for the purpose of using it toward elevating humanity. There is not a man, or woman, on earth, who earnestly desires means, wherewith to benefit the world, but whose prayer shall be answered, and wealth shall be given for the purpose; but those who desire it for their own selfish gratification, their prayers shall not be answered.

"My son, look about you."

Mark cast his eyes around, when, to his astonished gaze, there appeared a large concourse of spiritual beings—beings so beautiful and bright, that, at first, they dazzled his sight; but, gradually, his eyes became accustomed to look upon them; then, a number of them approached him, and one said:

"Young man, you have been found worthy, therefore your prayer shall be granted. Come with us."

Then two powerful and beautiful spirits placed themselves, one on either side of him, sustaining him beneath his arms; another, brighter and more powerful, even, than the others, led the way, and they all glided toward the not far distant mountains, and, as they thus glided, a beautiful city came into view—the city of Los Angeles. Here they paused as if to show him his bearings.

"My son," whispered his mother, "note well all the places where we make a pause. We pause that you may take note and remember. You must come to Los Angeles first."

Now they floated on, pausing once more over a village—the village of Glendale, a beautiful glen among the foothills of the Sierra Madre range; on once more they moved, until they paused at one of the Sierra ridges. This mountain was bare and rocky, with white zigzag paths running over it and around and about it.

"Now," said the voice of one of the band, "it is in this mountain that the largest amount of gold will be found. Look at it well, that you may not forget."

And Mark looked with his heart in his mouth. The mountain was not quite as high as some others—not as high as Mount Lowe—and was covered by white barren spaces, this mountain showing more of them than any other. Then Mark was taken directly to the largest

of these barren, white spots. From this spot they began to float downward, until they reached a wild gorge, and here they found quite a stream of water flowing. The water was as clear as crystal. They followed this stream up until they came to its source. Here they found a number of large springs, some spurting or bubbling up into the air a foot or more. The spot was wildly, grandly beautiful.

"Now," said one of the guides, "observe and remember. Within the bowels of this mountain are hidden vast stores of golden ore, besides other valuable minerals. You may open the mountain at almost any point within twenty paces of these springs and you will come upon gold; but, twenty paces to the right of the largest spring, you will strike a large vein. This vein has been caused, in past ages, by the trickling of a stream of water, as it wept its way through a large pocket—or mine—or deposit of gold. We would advise you to tunnel, or follow the vein until you come to the pocket. You are worth at this time over three thousand dollars. This amount will be sufficient to do all that is necessary. When you discover the pocket, sell, as soon as possible, for one million dollars. There is hidden within this vicinity at least ten million dollars; but do not keep it. One million is all you need for your purpose, and the labor of working it for more would be more than you could bear. Let others delve for the gold. Go you and benefit the world."

"But who will buy?" asked Mark.

"A New York Syndicate," answered the spirit. "Remember! Do not forget the way, nor the spot, and all will be well with you."

Saying this, the company of spirits departed from his view—all except his beautiful mother, who accompanied him back to the hotel in Redondo.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PROSPECTING FOR GOLD.

When the young man awoke again within his mortal body, the clock was just striking twelve. He had not been unconscious, or asleep, more than an hour, yet he had been shown all these things.

The old fisherman and the young man did not go out in the boat the next day; but the lame young man and his wife went in their stead, and Mark and Uncle Kester had a long interview. When Mark had finished telling the old man of his dream, and what had been thus shown him, Nathaniel remained in deep thought for some time.

"I beleve every wurd on't," said he at last; "but, howsumever, we both need a rest an' change o' sene. Now I'll jest tell yer whut we'll dew. We'll buy a fust class travelin' van, with a pair o' good, stout hosses; then turkle dove she shell go with us in her cuverd buggy. We kin git ter thet thar spot in jest about three days good travil. We'll jest load thet thar van with pix an' spades an' plenty o' provisions, an' a cupple o' nice tents, an' we'll jest go thar to thet thar spot an' pitch our tents. Turkle dove shell take a good, strong gal along thet'll dew our cookin' fur us, an' we'll take one o' them thar strong yung fellers frum ther settlemint, an' we'll go thar an' camp, hev a good time meanwhile, an' see whut we kin disciver."

Mark thought this an excellent plan, and he and the old man were not long in putting it into execution. Mrs. Kester was delighted at the thought of going, and the next week found them on their way.

Mark had another interview with Isabel. She also was very much pleased, and never a doubt entered her mind but that her lover would be successful in his quest for that which is called filthy lucre, still, all are struggling and grasping for it, some for one purpose and some for another; but very few, indeed, for the purpose of benefiting their brother man.

When all men and women lose sight of themselves in their efforts to help others in the world who are weaker, greater wealth will be given them; for then the whole angel world become interested, and together many come to aid them; for the higher angels think of little else than how they may benefit those below them, the oppressed, the down trodden, the weary, the hungry, the cold, the ignorant. The words of one who lived long ago are ever in their thoughts.

"Come to me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

How little people in general of the past have understood that text. They have supposed it to mean, to pray to Christ the Lord Jesus; but the words really never meant anything of the kind. They do mean: Pray earnestly, and look to the Spirit World for help. We may call the Spiritual Realms Christ, if we please. It is not one being, in the person of a Christ, who answers prayer; but many, very many good spirits within the spiritual world.

Mark, together with those who accompanied him, found themselves beneath the shadow of the mountain, on the third day of their journey. The sun was fast nearing the horizon, apparently ready to take a bath in the gleaming ocean, when they unharnessed their tired horses and commenced to strike their tents for the night. A camp-fire was soon blazing and by the time the full moon rose over the top of "Old Baldie," they were clinking cups and saucers, knives and forks, laughing and talking gleefully. The scene before them was most grand and sublime, and their laughter rang and echoed among the hills as though there had been quite an army encamped there, instead of simply five persons.

The moon shone so brightly that after supper the old fisherman and Mark thought they would look about a little. They had walked but a short distance when the old man exclaimed:

"Jewhiteker! Jerusalem! Ef thar ain't them thar springs yer telled on, rite ahed."

"I believe you are right," said Mark. "Those who love us in the other life, do not deceive us. Here are the springs just as they showed me. You must remember,

uncle, I have seen these springs before. They look precisely as they did when I visited them with my mother and other spirits."

"An' they telled yer twenty paces ter ther left, didn't they?"

"No, uncle. Twenty paces to the right."

"Egzactly! Now, let's pace it off, pardner."

So they paced off twenty paces.

"Let's put a big rock here fur luck," said the old man.

So they rolled a huge stone to the spot.

"We'll commence ter dig here in ther mornin', yung feller," cried the old man.

"All right, uncle! That is what we are here for."

"This ere is ther betenist thing I ever hearn tell on. I'll bet a taller candle thet yer'll soon be a cussed millioner, arter all. But who cud a thot it thet night as yer set all alone, out thar on thet thar bench, on old Redonder beach, without a cent in yer pockit, nowhar ter sleep, ner nothin' ter eat?"

"You forget, uncle, that I had one mill in my pocket."

"Thet's so, yung feller, an' at ther end o' a year, or perhaps next New Year's eve, yer'll hev a million."

"And I swear by the bright moon above me, and by all the beautiful stars, and by my loving and sainted mother, and the guiding angels who were with her, that if I do find myself possessed of such an amount of money, I will give the remainder of my life, all of it except that part which must be devoted toward making Isabel Morton happy, to suffering humanity for the amelioration of their woes. I will help to redress their wrongs and try to do my part toward setting the world right."

"Amen! Amen!" ejaculated the old man. "I am a gittin' nerly thro' with this life myself, but I'll help yer all I kin, be sure o' thet."

"I know you will, uncle."

They clasped each other by the hand to seal the compact and turned their faces upward toward the bright moon; as they did so, both started; for surely there were many misty forms hovering over them, one more distinctly outlined than the others, and that one, the beautiful, spiritual form, with the dark floating hair, the spirit of Mark's mother. But they soon melted away in the

bright rays of the moonlight, and Mark and the old fisherman returned to camp. Turtle dove was soon taken into the old man's confidence.

"Dearie," said he, "them spiritual bein's watch over us, es sure es yer live, an' no mistake."

"I have long been convinced of that fact," answered Mrs. Kester, "and we are all benefited when we listen to the voices of the invisible ones."

The next morning, bright and early, long before the god of the day made himself visible over the crests of the mountains, Mark Chester and the old fisherman went forth from the camp prospecting for the precious metal, gold. Gold that does so much good, and gold that does so much harm, according to the use which men and women make of it.

They went directly to the spot where they had placed the large stone. They had taken with them picks and spades, and here they commenced digging. It did not take them long to tunnel five or six feet into the mountain side, when they struck quartz. They chipped away at the quartz rock until midday, then they filled two sacks brought for the purpose, with some of the finest looking specimens, and each shouldering one, returned to camp. Here, in the presence of Mrs. Kester and the young man and maiden, they carefully examined their treasures, when lo! they discovered that the quartz was streaked heavily with gold.

"Wall, yung feller," remarked the old man dryly, "thet thar rock is good fur sore eyes, fur sartin."

After they had eaten a good dinner, in company with the young man they had brought with them, they returned to the diggings, and there worked bravely until the sun sunk into the Pacific—or, at least, it appeared so to them. By this time they had tunneled quite deeply into the heart of the mountain.

They had now dug quite through the quartz and struck a large vein of golden ore. They then filled three sacks and returned to camp. On examination they found this ore as rich as any they had ever seen on display, anywhere. This was now all that it was necessary for them to do at present, and a merry company they were, as

they sat around the table which they had brought with them in the van.

"Thet thar mine 'll turn out millions o' dollars, ef she's well worked, or my name ain't ole Kister," said that worthy gentleman with a beaming face. "Mark, my boy, yer in luck, sure. Ther fust chance a' stakin' 'll be yourn fur sartin. Stake yer claim fust, my boy, then I'll stake mine, an' thet thar yung chap kin then stake hissen. Gals, wouldn't yer like tew take a cupple o' claims?"

The young maiden said she should like it very much, and Mrs. Kester thought she might as well. They passed a happy hour or two more by the bright campfire and then retired.

The next morning they all repaired to the mines, and claims were staked out for each one of the party; and after once more partaking of a hearty dinner, they started on their way back to Los Angeles. Here they registered their claims and had the ore assayed; and it proved to be all they had expected it was.

When they returned they found Merry and Alstain at the hotel in Redondo. Mark was already slightly acquainted with these gentlemen.

After polite greetings and handshakings, Mr. Kester and our hero asked for a private interview, for Merry and Alstain were there as agents, or representatives, of a large New York syndicate. It had been through them that Marcus Chesterfield had found himself able to dispose of his mines.

At this interview it was decided that the following week Mr. Merry and Mr. Alstain were to accompany Mark to the newly discovered treasures; and if they found all things as they had been represented, they would, forthwith, inform the syndicate, and negotiations would at once be considered.

This they did, and before another month had passed, Mark Chester found himself a millionaire.

As he had the first choice of claims, his proved to be of greater worth than the others.

The old fisherman sold his for thirty thousand dollars; the young man who drove the van for them received twenty thousand and Mrs. Kester and the young girl re-

ceived ten thousand each for their claims, and we will here state that the syndicate took many millions of dollars from the mines; and, at last accounts, were still working the mines at an immense profit. Vein after vein and large pockets after pockets were discovered of the golden ore—but we will let the syndicate take care of itself while we follow Mark Chester and his adopted father in their careers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MARRIAGE OF MARK AND ISABEL.

Mark now sought Isabel openly, and when Mrs. Morton was made acquainted with the young man's success, she opposed his suit no longer. She forgot her former grief and chagrin and once more became the proud and haughty lady, who kept the aristocratic and exclusive private hotel, "The Morton House."

Mark was now supposed to take the finest rooms at the Redondo Hotel—the ones formerly occupied by Marcus Chesterfield, but to the astonishment of all, he still kept his old room, and spent not a cent more than formerly. This caused much comment, all coming to the conclusion that the young man was a despicable miser, but they were destined to find out their mistake before many months rolled by.

Mark Chester asked Mrs. Morton for the hand of her daughter Isabel in marriage, and she readily—and even eagerly—gave her consent. She hoped that at last she should reign at the head of the elegant establishment of a millionaire; but Isabel told her mother that Mark and herself had no intention of setting up a grand establishment; on the contrary, Mark intended to spend his money toward alleviating the woes of mankind.

The lady raged violently at this and wished to withhold her consent to the marriage, but preparations had been so largely entered into, for the event, that she found it impossible to do so. Mark settled a splendid annuity on Mrs. Morton, and then he and Isabel desired to be left to take their own course in life—a course in which Mrs. Morton could not, and would not join.

Mark Chester and Isabel Morton were married on New Year's Eve, just one year from the evening that Mark had arrived at Redondo and taken a seat on the lone bench on the beach without a friend or even an acquaintance in the town; no, he had not even ever looked on the face of a soul he afterwards met there. He had but one mill in his pocket and that was worth-

less to him as far as funds were concerned; it was also cold and after dark and he was hungry. In just one year from that evening he finds himself a millionaire and leading to the altar a sweet and beautiful maiden, the only woman he could or ever did love. Many young men, situated as he was, at the time of his arrival in the small town of Redondo, would have become tramps, thieves and vagabonds, and would have remained such until they had ended their careers in the penitentiary; but Mark gladly accepted the first employment that offered, no matter how low it was, if it were honest work. He availed himself of every opportunity presented and readily, industriously and honestly applied himself, determined to better his condition, and succeeded.

All young men may not succeed as well as he did; but, be sure they will succeed, even to their hearts' content, by patiently persevering in a straightforward and honorable course in life.

Mark did not wish to lay plans for his future until Isabel was his wife and helpmeet. He felt that as a single man he was but half of a whole; he desired to become a perfected whole—that the other half of himself might be joined to him that she might take an equal part in whatever enterprises they might undertake; but they would first enjoy their honeymoon and afterwards lay plans for their future course in life. This they did. They took a pleasant trip to San Francisco. Mount Shasta, Shasta Springs and Oregon; then to Puget Sound, and all the places of note in that vicinity, but they determined that Redondo should be their permanent place of abode. They felt sure that they could do as much good there as elsewhere, and so, from day to day, they perfected their plans, which we shall, in due course, lay before the reader.

* * * * *

Bancroft Library

We do not care to follow Jane Erie—or Mrs. Chesterfield, rather, in her career—but we will here say that it was an entirely selfish one. Like thousands of other wealthy women she lived for fashionable society and for self aggrandizement. To be a very queen was her ambition. She delighted in adulation—to have the world

bow down before her was her greatest ambition. Mr. and Mrs. Chesterfield kept a princely establishment in Paris Marcus often visited Monte Carlo, where he, at last, gambled away all he had, but a couple of million settled on his wife that he could not touch.

He had squandered and gambled away three million dollars; he was pale, haggard, trembling, excitable and peevish, almost to the point of madness. He never had performed a good or an unselfish act in his life. He had never tried, with his vast wealth, to make the world better or to help mankind. His life led to nothing but vice and vicious companions and his influence upon the world was to drag mankind downward into misery, poverty and degradation. His wife was little better.

Marcus Chesterfield sunk into a profligate's grave before he was forty years of age. His wife lived to marry a titled gentleman of high degree, but one as selfish as herself. He was ruined financially when he became her husband and married her for her money.

Not long after the death of her first husband, Mrs. Chesterfield was sitting alone in her private apartments. It was evening, and her room had not yet been lighted, when she saw Marcus standing before her, as of old. She put forth her hand to clasp his, but he receded.

"Do not touch me," he whispered. "I am now a spirit, but, wife, a most unhappy one, at present. They tell me here that when my past follies have been retrieved, I may be happy and progress into a better condition I hope this may prove true. Oh! Jane, my wife; strive to lead a more useful life; try to do all the good you can, for this is the only way to find happiness here." He disappeared. She laughed a mocking laugh, as she said:

"I will make myself happy here, on earth, first. One world at a time, say I," and here we will leave her.

* * * * *

After a delightful honeymoon, Mr. and Mrs. Chester returned to Redondo and to the Morton House. It was no longer necessary for Mrs. Morton to keep a private hotel, consequently the heretofore exclusive hotel became an exclusive private residence.

Mrs. Morton still kept her servants and set up her

carriage with coachman and footman in livery. Many beautiful things were added to the house—wings, and an elegant conservatory among them. Mrs. Morton engaged a landscape gardener and the grounds were made extremely attractive. Everything possible was added to the estate to make it luxurious and beautiful—and this was to be Mrs. Morton's home as long as she chose to remain in it. She was intensely disappointed that Mark and Isabel did not care to set up a princely establishment in New York city; but they had other views in life.

Now, Mark would open his heart to his wife, and she could help him to perfect his plans.

"Isabel," said he, when they were talking over what their future work should be, "where do you think we had better locate? Where can we best carry out our designs? Of course, we know there is much poverty and suffering in the city of New York; but one million dollars would be a drop in the ocean, in so large a city."

"That is true, dear Mark, and we are Californians. Don't you think it would be better to work in our own sphere, here at home, doing the work that lies nearest to us, and doing it with all our might? I find this to be an excellent rule, dear husband."

"You are right, Isabel. We need not go abroad to find work to do, but begin at home. And now that we have decided to remain at home, the question is, darling, what shall we do, and how shall we do it?"

"Suppose, Mark, we begin with that settlement of Shantiville, out there on the beach. Those people are in extreme poverty, most of them ragged and hungry; their little huts and tents are not much better than dog-kennels. Let us begin right there, Mark."

"So be it, sweet wife."

"And, besides, darling; you know there are a great many poor families right here in the city of Redondo."

"So there are, Isabel, very many indeed—so many that I fear a million dollars will not be enough to do very much."

"Never mind, husband. We will do what we can; that is all that is required of us, I think."

"Well, darling, how do you propose to begin?"

"That is a very beautful field you hired last year, the

most beautiful spot in all this neighborhood. Suppose you purchase that field, dear Mark?"

"That would be fine," he replied—"and then what?"

"How many acres are there in it, dear?"

"One hundred," answered Mark.

"I believe, then, we can provide for one hundred families."

"Yes, I think that would be possible by managing so that they might be self-supporting."

"That is just what I was coming to, Mark. We will purchase that field—it is for sale, as we know;—we will fence it off into one-acre lots."

"That is easily done, Isabel."

"Then, within each lot, we will build a neat, comfortable, convenient cottage—a home."

"We can easily do all that, my dear."

"But before we put up our cottages, we will run streets east and west, north and south, at the termination of each acre. This will cut the land up into squares of not quite an acre each, for the roads must be taken from each acre alike; we will set out trees on both sides of the roads and there will be two hundred roads, one hundred each way. We will employ these poor men, who cannot find work, to build the fences, grade the roads and set out the trees, and we will pay them two dollars per day for eight hours' work, one dollar for four hours."

"All right, my dear wife."

"Now we must find a competent builder and contract with him to erect the cottages, asking him to employ poor men whenever possible; and, when all is done, we will give a life lease, to any worthy poor man or woman who has a family, of a cottage, together with its acre of ground. At the death of any one, so holding a lease, the property reverts back to us, to be renewed by the oldest child or the father or mother who may be left, or to the one who decides to remain, or, perhaps, the one most worthy. These cottages shall all be alike, that there may be no jealousy between those who lease them."

"Now the question arises, how can these men and women support themselves?"

"Will what I have proposed take all the money, Mark?"

"Well, no, dear. I think not."

"Mark, do you remember that beautiful tract of land, not a half-mile from town, that you looked at so eagerly the last time we took our drive?"

"Yes, I remember that I thought there must be nearly a thousand acres in it."

"Do you think you would have money enough left to purchase that tract?"

"Well, darling, if I do not have enough, I know who would have enough, and I am sure would be glad to invest it that way."

"Uncle Kester? Oh! he would indeed. Mark, I am sure of that, and then you and that good man can raise hay, Yankee beans, and anything else that will pay—and employ these men to work for you at one dollar for four hours' labor, or two dollars for eight hours. I feel certain that you will be able to clear the money, thus invested, and, perhaps, something over."

"Yes, with good management I am sure we could."

"Mark, can we benefit the world in any better way than this?"

"I cannot think of any better way, my dear."

"Then we will put our plans into execution directly."

CHAPTER XXXV.

MILLENNIAL.

The old fisherman was now quite wealthy indeed. He had made a little Paradise of his cottage and grounds, and he needed nothing more, so he said; and when Mark and Isabel told him of their plans, he entered into them with great zest.

"Jest whut every rich man oughter dew," he said, "take his surplus money an' use it fur the benefit o' his feller creturs, an' no marter whut other men dew, I'll dew jest whut I like with my money. I shell buy thet thar field, lad, an' I'll go an' see about it this very day."

And he kept his word. Before a week had passed the thousand acre field belonged to Mr. Nathaniel Kester, the erstwhile old fisherman.

"Mark, my boy, we'll be pardners agin, an' ef we carnt push this ere thing thro', nobudy kin." And so operations were commenced at once, and on that one hundred acre lot, when next New Year's Eve came around, that lot that Mark had hired the year before, stood a beautiful little city of lovely cottages and one hundred men and their families were taking possession of them with happy, hopeful faces; contentment beaming from every eye. As soon as the rains would warrant, the one thousand acre tract, belonging to Uncle Kester, was to be put under cultivation.

Not one plan miscarried. When spring came, that great field was waving in grain and produce of all kinds that thrive in California, enough to feed thousands of men, women and children.

Mark was busy contracting with parties for the sale of the produce. A market for it must be found. He had not much trouble in doing this, for nothing was raised that the world did not need. There must be food for man and beast.

Mark Chester had, long ago become convinced that by exercising the human will to its utmost capacity, and grasping every opportunity as it presented itself, almost

anything might be accomplished; but there must be no wavering—a firm, continuous, determination; not necessarily a rush, but quick to see and using, as stepping stones, anything and everything that is honorable.

Mark Chester had thus risen in one year from a mill to a million. Mark Chester in two years had founded a beautiful little city, which he called Millennial; and a very Millennial it proved to be. No one need live in it if not disposed, but there the homeless found a home, the weary found rest.

The widow with her orphan children starved no more. Mark and Isabel did not stop their good works after Millennial had been built. Mark now desired that his people, as he called them, should understand that the two worlds—the Spiritual and the Natural—were interblended. He wished to tell them how his sainted mother had guided and watched over him, and how it was by following her advice he had attained to his present prosperity and happiness; and, that, really, all that they now enjoyed was owing to this circumstance.

He determined that a large and elegant temple should be erected wherein the people, who lived in Millennial, could congregate to hear those who taught of spiritual communion.

He was not long in bringing this to pass. Uncle Kester gave two thousand dollars; Mark and Isabel, one thousand each. The young man, who went with them to the mines, gave one thousand—so also did the young lady—for they had both become residents of Millennial, and, consequently, could well afford it. All the poor men in the community gave as much as they could afford—which, all told, amounted to about two thousand more.

They now had eight thousand dollars, and with this sum a beautiful building was soon erected, and those who taught the Spiritual Philosophy were invited to join forces with them.

Thousands visited Southern California to look upon the city of Millennial, and give forth teachings upon the rostrum of the beautiful Spiritual Temple.

After awhile two or three hundred Spiritualists clubbed together and purchased two hundred acres of

land, not far from Millennial, and built a city upon it, just like Millennial, comprising two hundred cottages; and these beautiful cities kept on increasing in number until the whole country was dotted with them, and at last, in this way, there were no more tramps—no more hungry men, women or children. The old selfish state of things, wherein the rich became richer and the poor poorer, where the oppressor rode rough shod over his victims and monopoly stalked broadcast through the land, was no more.

Dear reader, this story is prophetic. Such men as Mark Chester will arise in your land. Such cities will be built. The old-time millionaire will cease to be, and monopolies will be, at length, driven to the wall.

The End.

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